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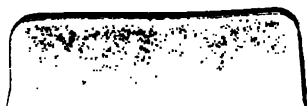
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HENRY GEORGE

AND HIS GOSPEL

By

LIEUT.-COL. D. C. PEDDER

Author of

"Where Men Decay," "The Secret of Rural Depopulation"

Etc.

Social Reformers Series, No. 2

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HENRY GEORGE

AND HIS GOSPEL

CHAPTER I.—BIOGRAPHICAL

TO the ordinary Englishman the life of Henry George is full of incredibilities. American novels that deal with middle-class life are deservedly popular among us, and we take this social atmosphere for granted, along with the scenery and decorations. The stupendous corruption of "Coniston" does not interfere with our enjoyment of the domestic drama to which it is a background. We leave probability behind us and enjoy our outing. A story opens with a tramp hunting hungrily for a dollar job or a meal of broken victuals. We sweep over the pages and discover him engaged in æsthetic flirtation with a haughty beauty in the very adytum of New York exclusiveness. Why not? "We do not know the laws of that country," as Charles Lamb said of the supernatural. In a story we are ready to believe anything, and in an American story anything else too. But when it comes to fact incredulity sits up and rubs its eyes.

The life of Henry George is quite outside English experience. The fortunes of the tramp pale in point of improbability before those of the Political Economist.

Here is a boy born as usual of poor but honest parents—the father a clerk in the Custom House of Philadelphia, on £160 a year—apparently in no way distinguished from their neighbours (honesty being seemingly not so distinctive among Americans of the lower middle class as it is in the

upper circles) in any material respect. There is a dash of salt water in his blood, and, after a year or two of schooling, a short interval of errand-boying, casual illumination with the magic lantern and popular scientific lectures, the sort of irregular education in the art of living open to every American lad in a large town, we find him at fifteen a boy "before the mast," in the fo'c'sle of a five hundred ton ship bound for Australia and Calcutta. "In the fo'c'sle!" In England we should say, "And there was an end of him." A twelvemonth at sea under such conditions would impose an ineffaceable stamp of social inferiority. He may rise to be skipper of a coasting schooner. He is practically debarred from competition for the higher prizes of life. Even Charles Dickens did not venture to put Walter Gay "before the mast." No English reader would have tolerated the idea that Florence Dombey could be unconscious of the degradation necessarily entailed by such an experience. He is a supercargo, a cabin clerk. And even to swallow so much as that requires a determined gulping down of genteel prejudice. And the feeling, like most that are pretty general, is not without its justification. If a man is to be a good workman his very nature must be more or less "subdued to what it works in." And in the English merchant service what it works in is, generally, brutality. A lad of sixteen who had spent his last year in intimate association with the fore-mast hands of a merchant ship would not be at home among the decencies of an English middle-class family. Father and mother would probably rather see their son dead than so degraded.

Preconceived ideas of this sort must be got over before we can realize a life like that of Henry George. The boy goes to sea, roughs it along with his fo'c'sle mates, and comes back to his family none the worse in any way. There is no talk of fatted calves or of purgatorial purification before he can be re-admitted to the society of pleasant lads and lasses to which he naturally belongs. But "a sailor's life is a dog's life." Home and a regular trade are better. Henry George's destiny seems to have been decided by the fact that he had an impediment in his *spelling* which nothing but type-setting could cure. So

he was found a place in a printing office, which, in a few months, he left for another. "Union" troubles and strikes hamper his activity. Some ladies of his acquaintance leave Philadelphia for Oregon, and it seems for a while as though there might be an opening for him there as a working printer. A letter to one of them (the "girl friend," who appears multifarious yet alike in her function as character-developer in the hobbledehoyhood of almost every young American) shows already a power of distinct and concise statement utterly incompatible with English notions of what might be expected of a boy fresh from a fo'c'sle. But to get from Philadelphia to Oregon in 1857 required more money than the youngster possessed, or was likely to possess. He was only eighteen, and there were his parents. Nothing more natural than that they should play Pelican in such a difficulty. Here is a difference at the very gate of manhood between the average Briton and the average Yankee. The idea of help from "home" does not even suggest itself to our young hero. I give him the title deliberately, and every incident of his subsequent life only increases his right to bear it. He will work his way out "round the Horn." Meanwhile, as work fails him, he ships in a collier schooner from Philadelphia to Boston. "And what can *you* do?" asked the skipper, *de haut en bas*. "Handle, reef and steer," says the lad, in the formula that sums up the qualification of an A.B. He could, and he got the pay of an able seaman at the end of the trip. Then he went on board a steamship for California as ship's steward. She all but foundered in a tornado, got yellow fever aboard, and only reached San Francisco, via the Magellan Straits, after a voyage of 155 days. The only thing characteristic of the man in this adventurous antechamber of serious life is the extreme anxiety he shows to keep from the knowledge of the old folks the dangers and hardships he goes through. To him it is all matter of course.

He was not long learning in San Francisco that Oregon held out no hopes for him in his trade. There was no work for him where he was. But the "placer" (surface) gold diggings which had brought a confluence of adventurers

to California were pretty well exhausted, and the report of gold discoveries on the Frazer River, in British Columbia, swept the whole mining population north. A cousin went up to open a store at Victoria, on Vancouver Island, and Henry George joined him for a while, before pushing up the Frazer with a mate in a canoe. But neither mining nor storekeeping was a success. Four or five months saw him again in San Francisco, "stony broke." The sea was apparently the only occupation likely to put bread into his mouth. His correspondence with home went upon simple lines. He gave the old folks all his hopes and none of his sufferings. They caution him against "making haste to grow rich" while he does not know which way to turn for a dinner. He has a darling sister, and his letters to her breathe the very spirit of enjoyment. He gets some temporary employment in setting type, and talks of his "beautiful little room and first-rate living." Then that fails and a job as weigher at a rice mill turns up. It keeps him alive, and he writes home about the "regular hours" it makes him keep, and the reading he does, in the most cheerful spirit in the world. By and by that, too, "closed down," and the indomitable youngster (he was not twenty yet) started to prospect for gold "on his own" in the interior. "A rough time" it was, he admits, the life of a tramp. Long before he got back to San Francisco he was only keeping himself above water by doing what odd jobs of farm work he could pick up on his way. Things were about as bad with him as they could be, so it is not surprising that he writes home of "splendid weather," "green peas and strawberries," and the future of California, with all the enjoyment of a tourist with a pocket-book bulging with circular notes. Printing work is found at last, but trade rules keep him to boy's wages, a bare pittance. Sister Jennie gets a letter which tells her of his feelings under these not very cheerful circumstances. "My heart is really in my work." "It is pleasure to me." "I am pitching in with all my strength." There was plenty of "pleasure," for work apparently began early and sometimes ran on till one or two in the morning. His mates in the office were "nice, social fellows," and he was

picking up everything he could both by reading and observation. He has "a pretty good prospect and is quite satisfied." Home seems nearer to his heart than ever. The death of a friend is told by his mother almost as though she were taking him into her arms to comfort him; his father writes of a constitutional agitation in the family in favour of ice-cream at Fourth of July dinner as he might to a boy at school. What is distance to love?

We have much to learn from America. Henry George comes of what we should call "thoroughly *respectable*" people. He is struggling *up* out of the very depths of personal poverty. To the respectable Briton such ascent implies the treading under foot of each successive rung of the ladder which the hand has grasped. He writes to his father of his pleasant New Year's dinner "with two of the 'Shubrick's' boys," seamen on board the ship on which he had made his way to California. It is *very* un-English. One would almost expect him to have kept that to himself in the fear of receiving a paternal admonition on the subject of degrading associations!

He is twenty-one now, has joined his trade union, and is earning man's wages. What is the next step in life to a man?

But now (1861) the East is seething with war. Sister Jennie writes of Mrs. Browning's poem, "Mother and Poet," that she "moves two nations with one song," that women must do all they can—give up their dear ones to their country. Changes in the administration bring with them changes in the personnel of governmental departments. The old father at sixty-four loses his post in the custom-house, is turned adrift to seek a livelihood as he can. As I write I have in my mind the wail of an old village woman in England. Twelve children she and her old man had brought up and started in life. Not one of them but had come upon the old people for help since, and not one who would now send them a sixpence to eke out the relief they were getting from the parish.

Henry George had nothing in common with *that* family. He was a man grown now, and had already begun to send money to make things easier at home. He has now got

a little share in a newspaper, the *Evening Journal*, which seems to promise. And he is very much in love and longing to marry. Of course he wants to sell out at once and help. And this is what the old father answers. "Your kind letter was worth more to me than silver and gold. It showed me that my dear son far away was ready to make any sacrifice to help his parents in distress. And so with all my dear children." Sister Jennie writes that "we all cried when we got your letter." She has the keenest interest in the success of this, his first independent venture, writes news-letters for the columns of the *Evening Journal*, and listens enthusiastically to the hopes and aspirations for the human race which have already begun to surge in the imagination of her brother, still a mere lad, working late and early for the means of bare existence, but who, somehow, always finds time to give his family a share in every interest that occupies his thoughts.

Consider the position. Here is a boy of genius, with the temperamental outfit of an unscrupulous adventurer, a "fore-mast hand" by antecedents, familiar by everything *but* personal experience with every vice of seaport towns and mining camps, with everything like squeamish delicacy as to physical association with rascaldom long rubbed off by rasping Need, reckless of danger and inured to hardship. And the place where he has to put his energies up for sale is San Francisco, at that time a *colluvies gentium*, a common cesspool of humanity. And he remains fastened like a little child to the apron-strings of his mother and his sister. He puts his hand into the hand of the old father and walks with him in spirit, though the whole continent of America is between them. The Duke of Argyll called him later on, in contempt, "the prophet of San Francisco." His life, at any rate, was that of a saint, and if the gift of prophecy *was* given him it could not have been put into a purer mouth.

It would be hopeless in a brief sketch like this to follow all the vicissitudes of a career constantly varied by the shifting pressure of the most primitive of necessities—the want of *bread*. Henry George married at two-and-twenty on a single dollar, the young lady being eighteen, a grave,

thoughtful girl, with a perfect comprehension of the risks she was taking. The match, of course, was a runaway one. One little incident is amusing. The bridegroom was a Methodist, the bride a Catholic. The Methodist minister was the only clergyman available. He good-naturedly hit upon the ingenious religious compromise of reading the service of the Episcopal Church, which "more nearly approached the Catholic than his own," and would therefore be less objectionable to the lady, while it was that of the bridegroom's original bringing up. Few young couples have had to encounter for the first few years so desperate a struggle with absolute destitution. Henry George was above nothing and equal to anything. He tramped the country as "drummer" to a clothes-wringer, he took tickets at the door of a hall inside which one *Mark Twain* was lecturing, he set type when he could get a casual job, and "subbed" when a friend took a day off. Literal starvation was more than once at their door. Henry George knew what it was to beg a stranger in the street for alms to keep wife and new-born child alive.

At last he got something like permanent employ in the printing office of a newspaper. And here it was that he began his literary career. It would have seemed at the time the acme of absurdity to refer to an event of world-wide importance, as additionally interesting in that it marked the point of departure of a newspaper hack-writer. It is not so now. The death of Abraham Lincoln inspired Henry George with an article which came out in the paper he was employed on as a printer. His next production was *paid*.

One might reasonably suppose that the news of the marriage of a penniless son to a penniless girl just at a crisis of national and family pressure would have been likely to disturb the affectionate relations that had so far subsisted between Henry George and his home. Not the very least in the world. The sister confesses to a momentary feeling of jealousy, and then lets herself go unrestrainedly to affection. And in love the two were never nearer than in the short six months between the brother's marriage and the sister's death. Her work was done.

Who can tell through what temptations her influence did not keep her brother safe from harm? Henceforth, and to the last day of his life, it was Henry George's wife who walked beside him as his stay and counsellor and support, as well as the woman of his first and only love. We will say no more of his family ties. Here are a few words of benediction from the old father that seal up that page for judgment. They are in answer to a birthday letter. "Yesterday was the anniversary of my birthday—I was expecting something from my children, and the postman brought six letters for me. Bygone days came back to me as if it was only last week when you came to me saying you would go to California. I did not object, and now the result has been all I could have wished. And then, when I opened the letters from your dear wife and children, I broke down." This was in 1883. He was eighty-five, full of years and love and happiness. He died ten days later, and his wife followed him within a week.

And now hack and editorial work began to come in—slowly and grudgingly enough. The San Francisco *Times* found him employment as compositor, reporter, editorial writer, and editor successively. When he ultimately left it, in 1868, he received a commission from the San Francisco *Herald*, with which he had now become connected, to negotiate in New York its admission to the telegraphic advantages of the Associated Press. It was perhaps his first encounter with the giant monopoly, already then, as now, "grinding the bones" of the American people into the fine bread dear to the plutocratic palate. This took him and his to Philadelphia, a great happiness to them all. Failing in his mission, after protracted and calculated delays, he organized a private service of such efficiency as to drive the Associated Press into coercing the telegraph company into such an alteration of rates in their favour as finally crushed the *Herald*. Henry George did not take his defeat lying down. He protested vigorously and eloquently wherever he could get a hearing. But the result left him out of permanent employment. Casual type-setting was again an occasional resource. But what he wrote found readers. The question of Chinese immigra-

tion was exercising the whole western coast, the very same difficulty as is now rising to a point of dangerous exacerbation between Japan and Canada. His views, expressed in an article in the *New York Tribune*, found large support, and gained him an approving letter from John Stuart Mill. The publication of this letter in the *Transcript*, a little paper he had just begun to edit in San Francisco, attracted great attention. The movement of which he had made himself the spokesman gained its object. The invasion of Chinese labour was restrained by successive Acts, and a certain amount of authority on politico-economic matters was conceded to the author of the article in the *Tribune*, which had first placed the views of the people of California on a defensible basis.

It is to the period of his editorship of the *Transcript* that he referred his first intellectual apprehension of the principle to the diffusion of which the greater part of his subsequent life was devoted. A glimmering intuition had come to him some years before when working his passage before the mast from San Francisco to Victoria. He "got talking with a lot of miners about the Chinese, and asked what harm they did, working among the cheap diggings. 'No harm now,' said an old miner, 'but wages will not be always as high as they are to-day in California. As the country grows, as people come in, wages will go down and some day or other white men will be glad to get those diggings that the Chinamen are now working.' " It was almost as if he had said at once, "Wages depend upon the relative productivity of the worst land in use." Flint and steel came together when a teamster told him casually that the selling price of some land lying within the possible range of a projected railway, in extension of the Central Pacific, had gone up to a thousand dollars an acre. Henry George turned his horse back and thought. That was the reason why Poverty increased along with Wealth. The apple had fallen, and the mental process was set up which was to result in the formulation of the law which would explain the fall of apples and quite a number of other things as well.

Meanwhile he was taking the place that naturally be-

longed to him, that of a front-fighter in the long battle that Right wages against wickedness in high places. The Central Pacific Railroad was sucking the very blood of California by a system of "subsidies," that turned it from a servant of the public into an autocratic master whose demands grew with what they fed on. A vast imperial endowment of land was nothing to its appetite. It made men and ruined men with equal ease. Its magnates were multi-millionaires, and the personal influence of their wealth was used in the extortion of one subsidy after another from a people reduced to helpless submission by lack of corruption-proof leaders. Haight, the Governor of the State, was man enough to set his face against this monstrous iniquity. Henry George's pen was at his service, but as soon as the railway felt its power they simply bought up the paper with which he was then connected, *The Reporter*, and so far stopped his voice. But when a man has earned the right to a hearing, heard he will be. A pamphlet over his signature on the subsidy question turned the scale of public opinion. Subsidies were stamped out, but an attempt to re-elect the Governor failed before the vindictive opposition of the railway corporation. Henry George was nominated for the State Assembly, but was entirely out of the running at the election. He had made Mammon his *personal* enemy. The scaly monster triumphed. And Henry George had leisure to write "Progress and Poverty."

Its initial form was that of a sizeable pamphlet, published under the title "Our Land and Land Policy." But it contained an unmistakable enunciation of the great economic law of which its author was the discoverer. The subsequent elaboration of this law in the book itself is rather a systematic disposal of the arguments against it by giving proof of its universal applicability, than an essential expansion of the principles laid down in the pamphlet. It did not immediately catch on—the mouthful was too large to be gulped—but it contributed to the interest that at once attached to a daily paper now started in San Francisco by its author and a couple of friends almost as impecunious as himself. The *Evening Post*

ran its race gallantly. It had its share in national as well as local politics, but its real claim to existence was its fearless antagonism to wrong. A case of extraordinarily brutal cruelty on the part of a merchant captain and his first officer to a helpless crew would certainly have gone unpunished but for the determination of the little paper. When justice could not be done by legal means against a wealthy man, the *Evening Post* did not shrink from openly advocating the methods of Judge Lynch, and with success. *Fiat Justitia*. It showed up the cruelties committed in a House of Correction, and dragged into the light the malpractices of a scoundrelly chief of police. The corruption in the purchase of school supplies and the insolence shown to women who dared to advocate Local Option by saloon keepers and their gangs came in for stern castigation. Of course furious personal vindictiveness was excited. Henry George, as editor, was only saved from a pistol-shot by the pluck of a bystander. He was not a man to be outraged with impunity, and let one abusive scoundrel have his fist in the face. The *Evening Post* finally passed out of the hands of its original owners by the manœuvre of a capitalist, who had advanced money and foreclosed at a moment of commercial crisis. Henry George came out of its management as poor as he went in. A friendly governor found him a post under Government, and he went about for some years as State Inspector of Gas Meters. This was in 1876. He was thirty-seven now, a man to be listened to, but who had not yet succeeded in condensing into a definite party those who had become converts to his distinctive opinions. He took an active part in the Presidential election, and in one of his speeches, the first that brought him into prominence on a platform, he struck a note of long and deep vibration. The people, he said, must no longer think that they have "only the choice which gang shall plunder them," but rise to a consciousness of the enormous importance of finding an explanation of and a remedy for their "chronic pauperism." This speech, "The Question before the People," put a new weapon in his hands. He could speak as well as write. There was a question of establishing in

his intention a chair of Political Economy in the university of California. He was, unfortunately, invited as a preliminary to lecture on his "subject" before the Faculty and students. A man who is in the possession of a key which will open every lock in Doubting Castle—the "Dismal Science," as Political Economy has rather happily been named—was not likely to be acceptable to professional turnkeys. "The *students* heard him gladly," the professors would have none of him, especially as the *Evening Post* had before driven the Government to investigate certain charges of "peculation" in connection with university buildings, which had led to the compulsory resignation of a distinguished regent. The abortive "professor" was chosen as "orator" for the Fourth of July in San Francisco. His speech was equal to the occasion, but its social importance was lost sight of in the splendour of rhetoric it displayed. He now declined a nomination to the State Senate by the "anti-coolies," the workmen whom he had championed in their resistance to the Chinese invasion, and set himself down steadily to the work of his life, the writing of a book that should put every man capable of following a simple chain of reasoning in a position to judge for and by himself of the professorially obfuscated issues of political economy. Skin and pulp and shell must disappear before the kernel of a subject can come in contact with the kindly earth which alone can bring it to productive germination. A little lecturing (for bread) interrupted its progress, but a tiny organization, "The Land Reform League of California," for the abolition of land monopoly, was now started, the firstborn of a numerous and still increasing family. This came as an encouragement, for he was now again defeated at an election which might have given him a leading place among local politicians. He would *not* submit to party exigencies where principle was concerned. This is not a temper which leads to success in American politics. And so the book went on.

It is perhaps here the time to say a word on a subject which will affect every reader in proportion to his endowment with a faculty which varies with individuals as much

as musical sense or the perception of harmony of colours. Was Henry George *only* an honest and able man who had lighted by chance upon a prolific idea and had the good sense to run it for all it was worth, staking his success in life upon his ability to "boom" it, or was he something more? Friends and foes will, I think, agree as to the *honesty* of his convictions. No one has ever accused him of being "a fraud." His book does not ask for Faith, but for simple Reason. It appeals to the hard-headed man as much as to the visionary enthusiast. But to those who recognize the immense reach of the issues with which it deals it has come to possess something like the character of a gospel, an evangel, a "message of good," of such importance as almost to imply a loftier commission than can be given by man. St. Paul and John Bunyan, St. Francis and Ignatius Loyola, almost every man who has greatly moved the fibres of the human heart has had some moment of ecstasy, of communication with the outside, which remains in his own mind distinct from the utmost exertion of his personal volition. And so it was with Henry George. This is what he writes: "Because you are not only my friend but a priest and a religious, I shall say something that I don't like to speak of—that I never before have told anyone. Once, in daylight, and in a city street, there came to me a thought, a vision, a call—give it what name you please—but every nerve quivered. And then and there I made a vow . . ." Was that his consecration? "The Lord knoweth." All we can say is that his life subsequent to the publication of his teaching shows no action inconsistent with such a belief. And if poverty, danger, labour and anxiety, all nobly and generously borne, can contribute to the formation of a character not unbefitting the recipient of a Divine message, we have seen that such ordeal had been his. And so we leave the question.

There were the familiar difficulties of publication. They were at last overcome, and "Progress and Poverty" was launched. It did not receive at first any very extensive recognition. But the subject of Rent, which is the keystone of the whole edifice, was just then before the public

in a concrete form. The National Irish Land League had just come into existence. The principle of "the land for the people" in the mouths of men like Parnell and Davitt was becoming a serious menace to rack-renting landlords. Henry George formulated it in a pamphlet, "The Irish Land Question," in which he claimed for the people at large the rental of the land which is their common heritage. The *Irish World*, a paper published in New York, suggested that he should himself pay a visit to Ireland and England. The offer was welcome to the struggling author, who had been turned out of his government office in San Francisco, and was wrestling with poverty in New York, by pen as a pamphleteer and tongue as a paid lecturer. But he saw in it also an opening for the world-wide diffusion of his doctrine such as America could not offer. Parnell was in prison when he reached Ireland, and the subsequent accommodation arrived at by his liberation, under the tacit understanding of the "Kilmainham Treaty," which quietly substituted "Home Rule" for "Land League," and threw overboard Michael Davitt and the "Land for the People" agitation, prevented Henry George's visit from having the importance in Ireland that it would have possessed had not this sudden change of front confused the aspirations of the people. But "Progress and Poverty" had laid hold of England. He lectured with success in Manchester and Glasgow, and a sixpenny edition of the "book" went like wildfire. His first lecture in London was given under the auspices of the Land Nationalization Society, which had then just entered (1882) upon that career of propagation which it has now continued for a quarter of a century. The programme of reform advocated by the eminent man, Alfred Russel Wallace, then, as happily now, at its head, only differed from his own in matters not affecting the basic principle of the movement, which still finds its most complete embodiment in the society. Henry George returned to New York with the consciousness of having, like old Bishop Latimer, "lighted a fire in England" that nothing can ever put out. A wedding-day note written to his wife, whom he had met as "a slip of a girl" twenty-three years before, and from

whom his thoughts and affections had never wandered since, shows us that the man's domestic life was running deep and pure and tranquil below the whirling surface of his public career. "Social Problems" was now written, and "Progress and Poverty" widely disseminated in a cheap edition. The Romish Church was officially hostile, but some of its clergy were enthusiastic in the cause. Father McGlynn, who was later on excommunicated on account of his outspoken views on the subject, became one of Henry George's most intimate friends. Wherever wrong reared its head Henry George was ready with a blow. An article, "Money in Elections," struck at that system in which corruption and terrorism go hand in hand, which has sucked the vital juices out of the free institutions of America. Some silly report of his having been "flooded" in argument by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, when in England, led him to state gravely and with conviction that his views had been carefully thought out and subjected to every test he could apply to them. He did not fear question, and challenged the greatest publicity that England could give. The "Land Reform Union," a branch from the Land Nationalization Society, which more directly represented his own views, now invited him to visit England again on a lecturing campaign. The cheap edition of "the book" had sown his doctrine broadcast. His first lecture (in St. James's Hall) was an earnest of success. Plymouth, Cardiff, Liverpool, Birmingham followed. The Crofter agitation had prepared Scotland. The Isle of Skye was visited as well as all the principal cities. Glasgow was perhaps the most enthusiastic. A "Land Restoration League" was started, and the example so set was followed in almost every considerable centre in Scotland. Returning through England he visited Oxford and Cambridge. Cambridge was civil though cold. But Oxford, the university which has just loaded Mark Twain with fulsome adulation, was equally extravagant in the other direction in its reception of the grave, world-worn, deeply convinced man, who asked a hearing for the gospel that was to raise the poor. What had *Oxford* to do with poverty?—or progress, for that matter. One noticeable incident in this

tour was his introduction to Cardinal Manning. Half a dozen words paint it. "I," said Henry George, "loved the people, and that love brought me to Christ." "And I," said the Cardinal, "loved Christ, and so learned to love the people for whom he died."

From Dublin he returned to America. "Society" had begun to look upon him as a danger, and his lectures were not a success. Attacks made upon him in the English press had to be answered. The Duke of Argyll, who had denounced him in the *Nineteenth Century* as "The Prophet of San Francisco," was answered in the same periodical. "The Peer and the Prophet," which was his rejoinder, bound up as a single pamphlet with the Duke's attack, found enthusiastic reception in the *West* of Scotland. Henry George's whole energies were now devoted to the preparation of his book, "Protection and Free Trade," which showed the futility of the belief that Free Trade could raise the condition of the poor as long as its natural working was nullified by land monopoly. But an appeal from the Scottish Land Restoration League to assist by his presence in the Land Reform movement, then going on in the lowlands, took him again across the water. Glasgow and Skye were enthusiastic, and the campaign as a whole was a brilliant success. It is interesting to know that if he had chosen to make his home in England a seat in Parliament would undoubtedly have been found for him. His ideas were finding acceptance in high places. The "Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes" recommended in 1885 the imposition of a local tax upon "vacant or inadequately used land" in order, by bringing new land into use, to force down the price of general building land. This contains the principle and the application of the principle which lies at the bottom of all Henry George's teaching. But he went back to his propaganda in America. And now a new field of action opened. He was nominated in 1886 as the Labour candidate for the mayoralty of New York. Heavily handicapped as he was by the want of organization among his supporters and the total lack of that "political machinery" which finds its motive power in comprehensive and shameless

corruption, his candidature for a moment struck terror into Tammany. He was bribed with a seat in Congress. "You cannot possibly be elected," said the agent of corruption, "but your running will raise hell." "Just what I want," said Henry George. The gallant priest, McGlynn, spoke for him, "as never like to speak again," in the teeth of ecclesiastical prohibition. His working men stood by him in a way that would probably have carried him in, had the event been decided by popular feeling—or even by votes cast. "How *can* George get in?" said a man "in the know." "*He has no inspectors of election.*" He ran second, Theodore Roosevelt third. "They never fail who die in a good cause" was his word of encouragement to his defeated friends. Eleven years afterwards he tried again. And the command, "Friend, go up higher," came to him in the middle of the battle that Duty bade him wage in the very face of Death. The brave priest was excommunicated after a good deal of brandishing of the *brutum fulmen* of Rome by local representatives of infallibility. He was obstinately impenitent, and the formation of an Anti-Poverty Society, of which he was president and Henry George vice, gave the signal for the launching of the thunderbolt. The Lord's Prayer had been cheered to the echo at the first meeting, cheered by an audience who had never before understood the true significance of the words, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done *on earth.*" Burial in the Catholic cemetery was refused to Catholics known to have been strict in the performance of their religious duties, because they had attended Dr. McGlynn's Anti-Poverty lectures.

It was just about this time that the word "single tax" came into use as a convenient denotation for the cause of which Henry George was the champion. The *Standard* was now started in New York as his own paper, and the line of policy it took up distinctly divided him from the party of advanced Socialism. This was fatal to the political hopes of the United Labour Party, which had so gallantly supported him in the city election. The Romish Church was a powerful disintegrator. When the result of the State election showed an unmistakable collapse some

one asked him if he "saw the hand of the Lord in *that*?" "No, I don't," he said, "but it's there." Secession and division were everywhere. In the presidential election of 1880 the *Standard* went whole-heartedly for absolute Free Trade, which was a principal issue before the electorate. But Henry George was a determined opponent of Tammany, with which President Cleveland was more or less associated. It was not without relief that, after Cleveland's defeat for re-election, he accepted an invitation to England. His reception was so warm and the extension of his propaganda so manifest that this short visit was almost immediately repeated. The teaching, as was cleverly said, had reached the third stage of the way by which every truth has to pass—"It is ridiculous. It is irreligious. *We always knew it.*" Henry George's work in this last lecturing tour in the United Kingdom was prodigious. He spoke everywhere; he scored everywhere; he had made himself almost a greater power with the tongue than with the pen. He returned to America after a final lecture in Dublin, at which Michael Davitt presided, and spoke with hearty conviction in favour of a Single Tax. From New York he started for Australia, by way of San Francisco, where "the prophet" had an enthusiastic welcome. "Seven famous towns contend for Homer dead, Through which the living Homer begged his bread." The streets through which he had sought for work, the doors he had vainly knocked at while his wife and child were almost on the verge of actual starvation and his own belt was drawn tight to still the pangs of hunger, must have had a strangely familiar air to the returned wanderer. New Zealand and the hearty welcome of Sir George Grey, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, all pass before us like the slides of a magic lantern. Everywhere Henry George and his doctrine were received with a thorough Australian welcome. In his return, by way of England, he renewed a former acquaintance with General Booth. It is curious to observe that it was upon Mrs. Booth's power and spirit that he seems to have founded the hope that the "Army" might be a potent agent in the diffusion of a doctrine that might make for religious at the same time

as for social reform. But her death shortly followed, and the paths of the two great reformers fell apart.

Henry George was still in the force and vigour of political manhood; but from this time forward we see that perpetual strain has already sapped his strength. "The Night, In ever-nearing circle," was already weaving her shade around his head. This was 1890. He had seven years more to live, and he *crowded* them with work. Death was much in his thoughts, but not in the character of a threatening spectre. Many calm utterances that show the spirit with which he awaited the summons are recorded by his friends. But they are all summed up in one sentence of a letter to his wife—"Let us love the closer while life lasts."

Love and Work. The primeval curse and its eternal counter-charm were both and in fullest measure his. It was now that he got to work on "The Science of Political Economy," a book in which he hoped to "define the science that names the conditions in which civilized men shall get their living." He desired to chain permanently the dragon of greed which was devouring humanity, to complete the inquiry into the causes and cure of progressive poverty which had been exhaustively conducted in his first great book, by establishing scientifically and for all time the laws of common honesty which ought to govern the relations of man and man. But his work was exposed to constant interruption. Instead of retiring from the fray and shutting his ears to the "shouting of the captains," he could not resist the temptation of striking one and then one more blow for the good cause. An encyclical from Leo XIII, in which his teaching was unmistakably though not specifically denounced, called him at once into the field with "An Open Letter to the Pope," who had apparently grouped together Socialism, Anarchism, and Single-taxism for the better convenience of blasting them with a single and comprehensive fulmination. The excommunication of Dr. McGlynn required some such justification. But though no direct response to the "Letter" was received from the Vatican, a reply was given which fully answered Henry George's highest hopes. The ex-

communication was unreservedly withdrawn. Dr. McGlynn resumed his functions as a priest and continued to advocate the single tax before the Anti-Poverty Society, as he had consistently done when under the ban of the Church. It was formally and for ever admitted that there was nothing in Henry George's doctrine that might not be held by a Catholic. Many consciences were relieved, and one great obstacle to its diffusion in Ireland, as well as the United States, was removed. The success in this case justified the interruption. But one may reasonably grudge the time and wear of intellect bestowed upon a controversy with Herbert Spencer. The great philosopher had in his first book, "Social Statics," published in 1850, enounced opinions with regard to the equal right of all to the land on and by which all can alone exist, which involved consequences quite as subversive as those which would follow upon a practical acceptance of the teaching of "Progress and Poverty." These opinions he afterwards modified so largely as to give his subsequent utterances the effect, though not the form, of a recantation. The controversy was waged at inordinate length in the columns of the *Times*, and elsewhere, and ultimately published by Henry George as a volume, "A Perplexed Philosopher," naturally overflowing into a discussion of the materialism of the Spencerian philosophy. The whole original question might have been fittingly disposed of in a dozen sharp sentences. But the sword draws the wearer to use it. Henry George possessed almost in as high degree as his opponent the power of logical and sustained argumentation. And he undoubtedly had the better case. He could not resist the temptation to "go in and win." Nothing can present more forcibly the extraordinary antithesis of the depths and the heights of a single American life than this duel *en champ clos* before the highest literary tribunal in the world, between the American, once A.B. on board a coasting collier, and the man who represented, and represented worthily, the accumulated learning and the intellectual outcome of English civilization.

And now again Henry George finds himself involved in the soul-wearying confusion of American politics.

Tariffs and Protection, Free Silver and Free Trade, the issues of only ten years ago seem already little more to us here than the battles of shadows. To Henry George, as to every honest American, they then represented the *immediate* triumph of Right or Wrong. McKinley and Bryan stood to him as the representatives of the "House of Have and the House of Want," and he chose his side accordingly. Bryan's defeat for the Presidency in 1896 was a disappointment to him. "It makes our fight the harder," he said. It was not the time for a man still capable of exertion to withdraw out of the arena in which his friends were struggling. In 1897 he accepted for the second time a nomination for the office of Mayor of New York, a city which now, by the absorption of Brooklyn, had become the largest but one in the world. Doctors gave him frank warning: "It will probably kill you." The question was between Henry George as mayor and the continuance of a state of rottenness and corruption in municipal administration that had already made the very name of New York stink in the nostrils of all honest men. He looked to his wife for strength and help. She had said in 1882 that "Michael Davitt should go to Ireland and be with his people even though it should cost him his life." What would she say to him? She said, "You should do your duty at whatever cost." That, she told her friends who remonstrated with her, was "what she had made up her mind to when she was a much younger woman," to stand by him and help him, *not* to stop him in doing what he thought was his duty.

It was to many honest men a battle of Armageddon, this election, a coming together at last in martial grip and struggle of the very principles of Good and Evil. The trusts, the rings, the bosses, the autocracy of Mammon personified in the millionaires on one side; on the other, the common people, the honest democracy, that believes that the democratic principle of Christianity has power to purify even the foulest recesses of a city like New York. Henry George threw himself into the strife with all his old fire and his old success. He trampled on the limitations that his growing weakness would have imposed on

his activity. "Three or four speeches" during the whole canvass grew to "four or five a night." "What counts a few years?" he said in the spirit of Tennyson's Ulysses. "Vile it were For some three suns to store and hoard myself." And wherever he went the wife stood beside him. And so the end came. Short and merciful it was. Something in the brain had gone. He stood erect and seemed to answer the last summons with the single repeated word, "Yes, yes, yes." Then his wife gently made him lie down. And he was dead.

He died a poor man. If he had chosen to take service with the Central Pacific instead of with God and His righteousness he would have been better paid. Who knows? He might have been a Thaw or a Rockefeller. He might have lived at Cliveden and earned a social repute by stories in illustrated magazines. There is no accounting for tastes.

CHAPTER II.—THE RIDDLE

"WHAT is it about?" is the first question a casual reader asks when he picks up a book which does not declare itself by its title to belong to the literature of love or sport.

About a riddle that has been, or is, or will be put to all of us in a practical form, either as concerning our forefathers, or ourselves, or our descendants. We shake our heads when we have had a look, most of us without even so much as that, and say, "I give it up. There is no answer. Why do two and two make four? It is a law of nature."

Now the riddle is this:—

"How is it that while there is plenty of everything man wants upon the earth, and the ways of getting at it are becoming easier and easier, there should always be more and more people half starved and half naked?"

Well, some forty or fifty years ago there was a man in San Francisco who happened to have a strong personal interest in the question. It is not at all an uncommon

case. He took to thinking about its whys and wherefores. His name was Henry George.

"Simplest thing in the world," said a reverend gentleman of the name of Malthus, to whom he turned for information; "that is, if you only want to know the reason. There is no remedy for it, of course. People will go on increasing and multiplying and getting ahead of what is got out of the earth to feed them. Increase the supply of food as much as you please, there will always be a balance of starving babies. Diminish it as much as you please. It doesn't make the least difference. There will always be more babies than there is food to feed them." "What is to be done?" asked Henry George anxiously. "Stop the babies?"

"I have already told you that that would be no good in the world," replied Mr. Malthus. "Poverty is a thing that must always exist. It is a law of nature. And besides, 'The poor you have always with you,' you know."

So, being a clergyman, he clinched his argument with a text and went off to his dinner.

Our poor friend was not quite satisfied. However much food there may be, there never *can* be enough for the people who want it! It was a big pill to swallow.

"Yes," said a thoughtful person who stood by, a Mr. John Stuart Mill, "it is a painful truth. But that is not all. The fact is that the more people there are in the world the less they produce—per head, you know, per head."

"Oh, come on now!" said Henry George, glad to find something he could contradict, "you are not going to get me to believe *that*! Why, I have been a miner, among other things, and a fore-mast hand in a schooner, and a lumberman, and a printer, and——"

"You seem to have been a lot of things," said the thoughtful person. "And of course experience has shown you that, up to a certain point, a number of men together will get more gold out of a mine and more knots out of a ship, and more timber out of a forest, and more print out of an office than they would if they worked separately. And so it would go on—for a while. But just think at

what a rate the babies would keep tumbling in while this increase in production lasted. Each mouth brings into the world two hands to fill it, of course. But that would become progressively more and more difficult with the increase in population. The most gloomy forebodings of our friend, Mr. Malthus, would be more than realized."

"Not directly, I hope," said Henry George.

"A time would come," said Mr. Mill, and he went off, shaking his head with an air of tragic prescience.

Henry George instinctively fended off with his elbows to keep back the press of babies who were going to crowd him out of existence. "Thank heaven!" he said, "it is not to be yet awhile. But just fancy! The more people that get together in a place like this, for instance, the less there will be for each of them. And they don't seem to understand it, or else, of course, they wouldn't come. That is why I can't get work myself, I suppose."

Buried in these thoughts he strolled aimlessly out of San Francisco, which from a mere cluster of sheds and cottages had grown within twenty years into an *enormous* city of more than *fifty* thousand inhabitants; and where poverty and the difficulty of finding employment that accompany over-population were already so rampant that he was pinched for food himself, and was making a walk do instead of a dinner.

Right under his nose a lovely stretch of land rolled in slow undulation to the distant foot of richly-wooded hills. As far as the eye could reach there was not a sign of cultivation, or even of life, beyond a few scattered cattle. An idea came into his head. "Why shouldn't I get a living out of the ground? There is lots of it doing nothing. A miner can dig, and an able-bodied sailor can turn his hand to most things."

He hailed a teamster who just then came lumbering along with his cart out of the heart of the great empty plain. "Nice land this—only wants ploughing. Do you know anything about it?"

"Why don't you plough it then?" says the teamster with a grin, looking at his shabby coat. "You can get as much as you want *now* for a thousand dollars an acre."

(Henry George stared.) "Why, a railway will be along here presently, and then the price will go up. This is a pro-gressive country, stranger."

It was somehow in that way that the two words, "Progress and Poverty," got together in Henry George's head. Here was one learned man talking about babies (George had got a couple himself, and the struggle for life among the swarming population of San Francisco was already so fierce that he could hardly keep them and the wife and himself alive. If he had not yet realized what "Progress" was, he knew uncommonly well what "Poverty" meant), and another about the misery that must inevitably arise from the fact that production per head was bound to grow less as men got more. And all the time here was land crying out for cultivation, and no one allowed to put a spade into it unless he could fork out two hundred pounds! And the quays of San Francisco were cumbered meanwhile with hungry men keeping themselves alive with doing odd jobs—like himself. "Why this thusness?" as Artemus Ward was asking just about that time.

He had got the riddle in front of him, stated in the most impressive of terms upon the very blackest of boards.

"What is the law which associates Poverty with Progress, and increases Want with advancing Wealth?"

He turns the two answers he has received over in his head. He has seen enough in travel of the illimitable resources of the earth to dispose at once of Mr. Malthus and his crowd of babies for whom nature refuses to provide, who are born into the world without "the slightest right to any share in the existing store of the necessities of life." As a practical worker he knows that production per head does *not* diminish with the number of men engaged in it—as long at least as they have productive material to work on and enough of it—it increases, on the contrary, at a tremendous rate. That is where the hitch evidently comes—"enough productive material to work on." It is one of those general expressions which leave a very vague idea on the mind. He turns it into a definite one, so as to get home to the question. "Say Land instead. First or last, everything we work on comes out of that—that

covers all possible 'productive material.' Well, two men on an acre would get more out of it than one. And four than two? I don't know. At any rate, when there were eight on an acre, each of the eight would get a great deal less to his share than each of the two, and I dare say the whole crop would be smaller. Long before it came to that some would have to move off. They would have to get to the best land they could—the next best land, that is, for of course the best would be taken first. And they would get less off it, unless they worked harder. And even that wouldn't make up the difference for long. By and by, as more and more came along, they would be as badly off as the Chinaman I saw yesterday scratching a bit of waste sand to sow pumpkins on. I suppose he may be making a quarter of a dollar a day at that job. Even a Chinaman can't live here on less than that. There are more of them washing over old dirt at abandoned 'placers'" (surface gold diggings). "That is open to anybody. No one is likely to quarrel with them about that. They must make about the same as the fellow that scratches the sand. If they made less they would take to his job—there is lots of barren sand to be had. If they made more he would naturally take to theirs—there is plenty of washed dirt to wash over. That's what it comes to. A man won't work at anything for less than he can make on the best land he can get at. John Chinaman won't wash a shirt for me at anything less than that rate. And I wouldn't do job type-setting at a dollar a day if I could get a bit of land that would give me a dollar and a half with the same work. It seems as if the power of getting at land fixed the rate of wages all round. Time's up, I must get back to my job."

So off he went to do the bit of type-setting that a friend's taking a day off had thrown in his way. It was not a very big supper that he had that night. He was not a grumbler, and did not set to and curse what he then looked upon as a law of nature, that the increase of population should make the struggle for bare *food* harder and harder every day. But when he turned in I think he very likely had a dream like this. *Un songe creux*, "a hollow dream,"

French people would call it ; the sort of dream that comes of hunger and always turns sooner or later upon Food.

Somewhere on the high seas, I dare say about the latitudes where the Ancient Mariner's vessel got into the doldrums, he found himself on a big ship, crowded with people. She was built on the old pattern, high quarter-deck and forecastle, and deep waist, so that all the after-part, the "cuddy," was quite cut off from the quarters of the steerage passengers forward—emigrants, apparently, for they were of all sorts, men, women and children. Provisions did not seem to be very plentiful. There was no want in the cuddy, but the rest were on short rations. He took it all in in a flash, the awning over the high poop deck and the ladies hanging over the rails and looking down upon the women and children clustered in the shade of the high bulwarks, the crew busy mending sails and splicing ropes, all the atmosphere of slow content that hangs over an Indiaman becalmed in a tropic sea. "Only I wish they had more food," he said to himself. And then all at once something had happened. A discovery had been made. A large parcel of fish-hooks had come to light. And at the same instant he perceived that the whole sea was alive with fish, fish of all sorts and sizes, from a sardine to a porpoise. Hooks were served out to the emigrants, lines were twisted and shotted, and the slow quiet of the waist was exchanged in a jiffy for the most animated bustle and commotion. Splash, splash went leaded lines as sturdy arms cast them out ; flop, flop the tails of the captured fishes resounded on the deck. The dreamer thrilled with altruistic delight at the idea of the general frying that was to follow. A little to his disappointment the whole catch was carried aft for distribution ; but instead of anything like a fair division being made between cuddy and steerage, he saw with that uneasy discomfort that takes the place of surprise in dreams, that only the heads and tails were brought out for the emigrant part of the ship. These, however, were fallen upon eagerly and devoured, and no complaint was made. There was abundance of hooks—it was quite a big parcel that had been put on board—and plenty of willing hands to bait and throw

them. But they were served out very grudgingly. The cuddy passengers set great store by them as ornaments, and very gay they were. This went on and on. Time counts for nothing in dreams. But by and by some new dodge of casting or baiting was discovered by one of the steerage passengers. This device doubled, quadrupled, decupled the catch. "Plenty for everybody *now* at any rate," he thought. There never was a greater mistake. The cuddy had before been content with fish fried and boiled. Now they wanted it curried and barbecued, *en marinade* and *en papillote*, bedevilled in a thousand different ways. The stewards made anchovy sauces and sardine pastes, sturgeon yielded their caviare and were tossed overboard, a contest of luxury arose among the palled and sated appetites of the cuddy passengers. They vied with each other as to the quantity of the choicest sorts that could be consumed at a meal. Their demands constantly outstripped even the abundant harvest of the sea. The emigrants were worse off than before. Violent quarrels arose among them as to how the miserable garbage that had escaped the greed of the cuddy should be divided. The ladies of the quarter-deck—bloated, frizzled, and hook-bedecked, looked down as before upon the women and children in the waist below them. But there was no more tranquillity. All struggled and swore and scratched in the desperate effort to get stale fish-tails enough to allay the pangs of hunger. The ladies above said they couldn't understand it. "Those people had food!"

R. L. Stevenson has somewhere an amusing dissertation on the tricks the two lobes of our brains play one another when the master, the will, is asleep. All at once our dreamer saw that he had known all along what was wrong. Something possessed him that sent him flying along the decks, shouting, "You fools! you fools! that parcel of fish-hooks was put on board by the owner for the *ship*! For the ship, I tell you, and everybody on board of her. It doesn't *belong* to the cuddy! It was put on board by the OWNER, I tell you, for the ship! And all that is caught is the ship's!"

Hungry dreams always end in nightmare. He seemed

to go on like this for years, thrusting his way through crowds of people—now in the waist, now in the forecabin, and now in the sacrosanct cuddy itself. At last, when his voice was hardly more than a death-rattle—somebody called. And he was awake and looking at his wife's face as she lay asleep beside him, with her baby in her arms.

That, or something like that, was the genesis of "Progress and Poverty."

Well, dreams are delusion. And illustration is not argument. And parables are creatures that will not keep all four legs on the ground at the same time. But I think this one of the ship is worth a word of exposition. The owner is God. The ship is the world. The fish-hooks are the means of production of all sorts He puts on board for the *general* good. Work out the rest for yourself. Only notice that misery grows more intense as production increases. By what sort of wicked compact between captain and wealthy passengers it was that the parcel of hooks got into the possession of the cuddy we will not stop to inquire. We must take things as they are.

CHAPTER III.—PROS AND CONS

WHAT *are* the means of production God put on board when He started the human race on its voyage? One single word covers them all, and that word is LAND. Try your very best to imagine *anything* that is not part of the surface of the earth, of the egg-shell that stands between us and the seething yolk of fire which forms the substance of our globe. It is from it and on it and in it that we "live and move and have our being." If we put its power of producing what man needs to profit, we flourish and are as happy as food and warmth can make us. If we don't we sink into the condition of pot-bellied savages, their personal food-storage necessarily enlarged so as to accommodate provision for the days of starvation that follow a gorge. The regularity of the seasons and the fertility of the soil are quite enough to give mankind a regular and abundant supply of everything necessary

for their bodies and their brains (for their physical and moral well-being, if you prefer long words), if only they will take advantage of them. And the more effectually and with the less labour they can do this, the greater will be their abundance in bodily comforts and the more leisure they will have for the higher pleasures man naturally turns to when hunger and cold have left off interrupting him with their insistent outcry for attention.

As far as this goes I really don't think anybody will care to contradict. It seems self-evident. Only, not only it doesn't happen, but the very reverse does.

If we don't get all that possibly could be got out of the earth by agriculture, it certainly is not for want of *knowledge* of how to get it. If "leisure," after bodily needs are provided for, is confined to that small fraction of society that goes by the name of "the leisured class," heaven knows it is not for lack of labour-saving machines. Read books written by competent men about the condition of our working classes, that is, of the whole English people *minus* perhaps twenty per cent. If they are not hungry and cold to-day they probably will be so to-morrow. They are morally pot-bellied, like our savages, and have to set a time of comparative comfort against another of hungry prowling. Happiness is a home-made article, and they have no "home" from the cradle to the grave. The regularity of nature and the fertility of the soil fail to provide them with regular and plentiful food and warmth. God's commissariat has broken down.

Is this the fault of God? Is it a necessary consequence of the working of natural laws which we have got to accept just as we have to accept the multiplication table? Is vast and *undeserved* Poverty a hideous disease inherent in that association of mankind for the common benefit of all, that goes by the name of Human Society? Malthus and John Stuart Mill say practically that it *is*. Henry George says that it is *not*. It is not God's laws that produce this welter of hopeless misery, it is a mere human institution, grafted upon them by the selfishness of a few and the helplessness of the rest.

We will put Mr. Malthus and his crowd of devouring

babies on one side. As the good old song, *To the West*, says, "Children *are* blessings" (would be, if their parents got anything like fair play), and the human race is *not* being constantly devoured by its offspring; it owes, on the contrary, its whole material welfare to their abundance. They are the greatest asset society possesses.

We have seen already generally how Henry George answers the assertion that the more workers there are the less they produce per head. It is odd what a lot of words it takes to state in scientific language the old selfish fallacy, "The more the merrier, but the fewer the better fare." (Modern version: "The more the miserable, the better fare for the few.") But there is a truth in it. If you increase the number of workers beyond the point where a greater number can get more out of a given supply of the material they work on, their production per head is bound to diminish. Production decreases in some certain proportion to the increase of population (workers), and the decrease or not proportionate increase of the material they have to work upon.

Now Henry George begins by laying down as a principle that the word "land" comprises everything whatever upon which human labour can be exerted. He waves his hand all round him. "Here is material enough and to spare. Look at the vast steppes of Asia, look at South America and the prairies of our own United States. Australia and Central Africa are crying out for men to till the soil. Or if your imagination is incapable of such flights, take a ticket to Scotland and look at the wildernesses produced by exalted beings like Mr. Winans and the Dukes of Sutherland. Or go to Ireland. Or stay where you are in England and look round you. There is uncultivated or half-cultivated land in England enough to find a comfortable livelihood for the whole of the mass of human misery that makes London stink in the nostrils of the civilized world. Use what material you have got and industrial distress will disappear."

"Oh, land!" say the objectors. "Of course, there is lots of *land*. We might as well put that out of the question, for we can't disturb private property. There is very

little available land, indeed, now, that doesn't belong to somebody, and the sanctity of property goes on increasing with the area of possession. Fancy disturbing the Marquis of Lansdowne! But just admitting, for the sake of argument, that there was open to cultivation at this minute a lot of land that is now surrounded by park-palings, or fenced in with barbed wire for sheep-runs, or kept out of the market in the hope that its value will go up as misery increases in the centres of population—that is, now kept out of cultivation by the legitimate exercise of the rights of ownership, in fact—pray, do you suppose that the girl who keeps body and soul together by colouring post-cards, or the silk-weaver whose finger-tips have to be as delicate as a lady's, or the potter whose hands are specialized by his work into something no more like the horny fist of a ploughman than a cat's velvet paw is like a donkey's hoof, or the machinist whose whole life, from boyhood to old age, has been passed in turning out the same little bit of the many little bits that go to the making of a watch, or a boot, or a sewing machine—do you really think that all these utterly non-agricultural folk would find their own special sort of work easier to get and their wages better because Mr. Winans had been marooned on Staffa and every park and pleasure in England taken from its lordly owner and restored to public right ? ”

CHAPTER IV.—REASONING

AND Henry George answers and says, “ I do.” If I tried merely to condense his argument I should probably do it less justice than by taking a bit here and a bit there and presenting his conclusions with only just as much support as they seem to me to need. “ Progress and Poverty ” suggests many cases of possible economic difficulty and goes out of its direct course to meet many possible objections. It is almost superfluous in its conscientiousness in this respect. These side issues are interwoven with the chain of demonstration in a way that makes abridgment difficult. So I shall try to communicate the

conviction that reading it has left on my own mind rather than follow each step of the argument by which that conviction was attained.

To begin then. Imagine human society as a pyramid, broad-based upon the primary arts, the production of corn and cattle, and gradually tapering to the top through successive and diminishing layers of less and less necessary arts till we get, say, to a poor girl colouring picture post-cards at the point. This pyramid of course keeps on being built bigger and bigger as population increases. Now suppose that the lowest layer for some reason or another ceases to be built out wider, the builders all the same being compelled by King Pharaoh, under pain of death by starvation, to put their bricks *somewhere* into the pyramid. It must of course get top-heavy, and as it goes on getting bigger, by and by there will be trouble up above. The proportionate and progressive extension of the base is necessary to the safety of the whole superstructure. The artificial limitation of the primary arts *must* be a danger to society at large. But what has got to be shown just here is that their extension would be a relief to every less necessary art (of secondary, tertiary, or whatever you please -ary importance) that rests upon, that is in a double sense *supported* by those basic industries.

In the first place we must get rid of that confusion of ideas that comes of the profusion of words in which the (pseudo) science of political economy has entangled a simple subject. A poor sweated seamstress stitching blouses at eighteenpence a dozen in a garret in White-chapel is really producing corn on the land God gave to her in common with the rest of mankind. And when a bulbous-nosed Hebrew capitalist tells her that next week she will only get a penny apiece, and lucky if she gets that, the real kernel of fact at the bottom of the sordid transaction is that the Rent has been raised on the scrap of Land under her feeble cultivation, and that she has had to go a step lower, to take up another scrap of land that will only yield two-thirds of the produce of the one she has had to leave.

To understand this one must fall back upon Ricardo's

"Law of Rent," which John Stuart Mill calls the "ass's bridge" of political economy. "The rent of land is determined by the excess of its produce over that which the same application can secure from the least productive land in use"; or shortly for convenience, "Rent is whatever *any* land in use can produce more than the worst land in use."

Rent is the property of the landowner. And as the supply of land is limited by the Winans and the House of Land-Lords and the millionaires, and the "undistinguishable throng" who join them in the "universal prayer" of their kind, "O God, give me a piece of Thy earth that I may keep my brother off it!" and as the need for what it produces and the number of people who desire to cultivate it increases with the increase of population, it follows that competition is set up, that worse and worse land is taken into cultivation, and that consequently the *Rent*, the landowner's share in the produce of any land, becomes more and more, and the *Rest* less and less. I have an instance before my eyes as I write. Cultivated fields, or fields once cultivated, run right up to the top of the chalk downs. It was all short down turf, they say, until the great war of Napoleon's time. Any land that could give the barest margin of profit to the cultivator came then under the plough. And rent throughout England rose to a preposterous figure. Squires hunted, rioted, and gambled. The poor suffered horribly and unnecessarily from their wasteful luxury. The need and misery of the nation was the prosperity of a fraction of the nation. The man who cultivated the land had to give the man who owned the land all the produce, except just as much as he could have got by scratching up the bare down, made barer still for him by the fact that he had to pay rent even for that. If there had not been any land uncultivated over which cultivation could extend, the cultivator would have been absolutely helpless. The "Rent" would have swallowed up the "Rest" altogether. The cultivator would have been squeezed to the point where he sat down and refused to work any longer. To starvation point, in fact. This is what did really happen afterwards. Fifty years later

another war brought a period of high prices. Rents rose. The cultivator was squeezed to the very margin of existence.* Cultivation had run uphill, on to the downs, already as far as it could possibly go. It was knocking its head against my lord's park palings. The landowner could say, "Here is land at so much an acre, take it or leave it."

Somebody will say very reasonably, "But I thought those were the golden days of the farmers, the days of their hunting and shooting and feasting and general jollification. And it is the farmer who pays the Rent."

Nominally it is. But who cultivates the land? The farmer is only the middleman. The *labourer* is the cultivator. The farmer stood on one side and let the pressure fall on him. And the agricultural labourers were actually brought as *near* starvation as men can well go. At last they did sit down and refuse to work. The Agricultural Union of 1870 was a partially successful rebellion against the *Law of Rent*. Nothing short of that would have saved them. The farmer is merely the landowner's well-paid agent for the enforcement of this great economic law. The landowner shuts his eyes.

"Half ignorant, they turn an easy wheel,
That sets sharp racks at work to pinch and peel."

We may divide the produce of any acre of land you please that is private property (and as pretty nearly all the land in the civilized world is now private property, that is as much as saying the whole wealth of the whole civilized world) into two parts. One belongs to Rent, the landowner's share; the other to Wage, the cultivator's share. There is no other primary factor in the sum. Then whatever is added to Rent *must* be taken from Wage. There is nothing else to get it from. If the value of land goes up, Rent goes up. That is, the reward of Ownership becomes more, and the reward of Labour less. When a land-owning Parliament carried the Corn Law in 1815, which

* *Wages between 1855 and 1871 were about 6s. or 7s. in the South of England.*

restricted importation and kept wheat at famine price, they did it in order to keep up Rent and rob Labour.

"Ah, that concerns Land," you say. "But land isn't everything."

The very point is that Land *is* everything. Every object in the world to which Labour can possibly be applied has originally been produced by land and its supply is kept up by land. Land and Labour stand always in the same relation to one another, though the force of Labour may have to be transmitted through a hundred forms of production before it is ultimately delivered upon the source of production and actually drags corn out of the earth.

And so a diminution of wage, that is, of Labour's share in the produce of the Land, passes back through a hundred forms of labour till it reaches the seamstress in the *garret*, who has delivered her little peck at the land with the point of her needle.

Suppose a couple of children with a bowl of milk before them. One dips out a spoonful. "Oh, that's unfair, you're making the milk go lower on my side!" says the other. "I'm *not*," says the dipper, "I took it out of my own side." They must be very young children not to see that the excuse is a bad one. If the bowl was a mile wide, the level on one side would feel the abstraction on the other. Directly if the milk was as limpid as water, more slowly if it was thick.

Now the labour market, the whole system of adjustment by which wages are determined, is not so immediately sensitive as our supposed clear milk in the bowl. Its sensitiveness depends upon the perfection to which Exchange has been brought. Our seamstress's work upon a blouse is paid for with a penny-halfpenny, with which she buys a bit of bread which (I *hope*) came nearly straight from a cornfield. So she seems to be in almost direct relation to the Land. Not at all. This little "pecuniary transaction" tells you by its very name of the system of exchange which it represents. "Pecunia," which means money in Latin, comes from "pecus," cattle, and they say that the first coins had an ox stamped on them, to show what each stood for. An ox could be swapped for

so much corn, say, and this "token" saved the trouble of driving it from Abel's fold to Cain's field till it suited their convenience, Abel meanwhile getting the corn on the strength of this "promise to pay." The blouse (the labour that gave the cotton that shape at least; to trace the cotton itself back to the bit of land in South Carolina, where labour originally dragged it from the soil, would be too long a job) is handed by the sweater to the contractor, who hands it to the wholesale dealer, who hands it to the retail dealer, who hands it to the village shopkeeper, who hands it over to Mrs. Jones, whose husband works for Mr. Brown, who is a farmer on Squire Topper's land and pays him Rent. And if there are wars, or only rumours of wars, and grain dealers keep back their stocks of corn, corn will get dear, Land will increase in value (as the supply of it is strictly limited by Mr. Winans and his noble "Co."), Rent (the share of Squire Topper in the produce of his Land) will go up, Wages (the share of Mrs. Jones' husband in the produce of the Land) will go down, Mrs. Jones will not be able to buy a blouse, blouses will become a drug in the market, and our seamstress will only get a penny for making one instead of a penny-halfpenny. Regular "House that Jack built" business, isn't it?"

Mrs. Jones *wants* the blouse as much as ever, and the woman with the needle wants the odd halfpenny as much as ever, but Squire Topper has got a chance of increasing his share of the produce of his land and diminishing theirs. And Squire Topper is not the man to lose it.

I think it is pretty clear that the needlewoman is helping in the cultivation of that land just as if she was carrying a whip and saying, "Gee woa!" to the horses, while Mrs. Jones' husband drove plough. She is supplying him with what he wants, and to get what he wants is the only reason that makes him work. He will grumble a bit when Mrs. Jones can't get her blouse, but when it comes to no shoes on his children's feet and nothing in the pot for supper but a stolen swede-turnip, he is likely to cut up rough. *How* rough nobody exactly knows, and it is that uncertainty that keeps landowners from exercising their legal right in its entirety.

When all land is owned so that its supply depends upon the will of the landowning class, the rise of Rent is only limited by the breaking-point of human endurance.

Long before that point is reached misery is propagated in widening circles. One tiny ripple of "economic disturbance" has reached our needlewoman in her garret and swept away a third of her living. Henry George traces the industrial depressions that periodically sweep over highly civilized communities to the same cause, new restrictions imposed upon access to land. As population increases, the demands made upon production by the human race go on increasing, even faster than population, till the limit of possible supply from *present* material is reached. New material, that is, new land, must be subjected to industry. The *variety* of things demanded gets daily larger and larger. Look at food. Five hundred years ago the Earl and Countess of Northumberland, the greatest people in the north of England, were contented with white bread, beef, salt herrings, and a pot of beer for their daily rations. (Their table books are still kept, I believe.) There is a good deal of difference between then and now. Horseback was the only way they could get about. Motors that cost a thousand pounds are *common* nowadays. A picture-book was a luxury indeed. Look at the photographs that you can get now at a penny apiece. From the top to the bottom is exactly the same. We all want more things and more sorts of things than our fathers did. And our sons will be exactly the same.

Now I think we are agreed that *everything* (photographs and all) comes originally from Land. Everybody really knows that by instinct. So as soon as the increase of population and the still greater increase of demand that comes along with it make themselves felt in a scarcity of anything, Land goes up in value because the supply of what is wanted must sooner or later come from it. Rent goes up, Wages go down, and the whole merry-go-round is in motion, to the great distress of poor people in the slums, who, perhaps, have never seen a cornfield in their lives.

But that is not the worst of it by a long way. Men who have land to sell and land to let hold on to it in hope of

its value going up still more. So that keeps much land out of productive occupation, cultivation, or what you will. And then another thing happens. Capitalists, whose proper business is to make it easy for Land and Labour (Industry and Material if you like) to come together for the general advantage, instead of helping employers to increase their businesses and so turn out more of the things that mankind wants (shoes or bricks or sewing-machines, or what not), buy land instead with their money, and hold on to it in the hope of its going up still more in value, and so of their being able, as landowners, to put the screw on in Rent more than they could have done in Interest.

So just at the time that the want of land is making itself felt more and more in the scarcity of supplies, Land is getting harder and harder to come by, and Rent is not only rising of itself, to the injury of Wages, but is being *forced* up by speculation. By and by come, naturally, misery and starvation and riots and bankruptcies, the familiar concomitants of "industrial depression."

Here are a couple of new words, "Capitalist" and "Interest," that want explaining. But before I try to explain them let us go back for a moment to Rent and Wages.

CHAPTER V.—CAPITAL

IT is clear enough that Wages go down all round as Rent rises. Would it be true the other way about? If Rent fell would Wages go up?

Well, suppose England were to take it into her head to create another little county, only just about as big as Rutlandshire, by putting a dam across the Severn Sea between Cardiff and Weston-super-Mare. Labour would stream off there from over all England. Landowners elsewhere would lower their rent just to keep men on their land, the share of produce that *Rent* lost would go to Wages, Mrs. Jones would certainly have a new blouse, and our workwoman in Whitechapel an extra halfpenny.

Wages depend on the greater or less freedom with which men can get to Land.

Some people contradict this. This is what most political economists say: "Wages are fixed by the ratio between the number of labourers and the amount of Capital devoted to the employment of Labour, and constantly tend to the lowest amount on which labourers will consent to live and reproduce, because the increase in the number of labourers tends naturally to follow and overtake any increase in Capital."

This is our old friend Mr. Malthus again with his balance of bables for whom nature entirely refuses to provide. The increase of population is at the bottom of Poverty, says he. Well, looking at the enormous increase in the power of production that has accompanied the increase of population, a quite disproportionate increase, so that if labour, aided by machinery, could get to material freely, a couple of hours' work per man per day would probably supply humanity with all the necessities of existence, and looking at the enormous supply of material (land) brought within easy reach of industry by steam locomotion, one is not inclined to accept this explanation as satisfactory.

But then there is the word "Capital." Labour, it seems, depends on Capital for employment. If there are more labourers than Capital can find employment for, the balance can get no wages and are bound to starve. Land may be as fertile and as free as you please, if there is not enough Capital Poverty must exist. And there never *can* be enough Capital, because population is always increasing faster than Capital does. Now what is Capital?

"Wealth devoted to procuring more wealth." "That part of a man's stock which he expects to afford him revenue is called his capital." Wealth means "well-off-ness." All that a man has or that a country has is its wealth. A bushel of corn is part of the "wealth" of the man who owns it. He takes some out and lays it aside for seed—that is Capital. He saves it from his Wealth to bring him more Wealth. And so with everything. Let us go back to very early times indeed, and look at Capital in its cradle.

Not quite so far back as the Garden of Eden. That gives us a glimpse at man before he began to be bothered with "economic conditions." Still, some way back, as far as to what was an old story to a Greek poet who wrote (more probably chanted) some eight hundred years before our Lord's days. That puts us some three thousand years *nearer* to the beginning of human society. Man wants, he says, "a house, a woman, and an ox for the plough." Now see what a lot that means. Take the ox. Suppose a man to begin as a cultivator without an ox. Out of his year's crop of corn he will put a little on one side for seed. That is the beginning of Capital. But if he gets a particularly good crop he will get ambitious. "This corn would give me an extra full meal every day till next harvest," he thinks. "That is Wealth" (well-offness) "indeed! But by pinching my belly I can spare enough to swap for an ox. Then I shall be able to get more land ready for seed, and my future well-offness will be greater." So he turns Wealth into Capital and invests his Capital in something that is to bring him Interest, the difference between the crop he will get *with* the ox and the crop he would have got without it.

Capital is born of Labour. It is saved from Wage, which is the reward of labour. Of course, in early times there was no rent, because land was abundant. No one would pay another for leave to cultivate what he could have for the taking. So the *whole* produce, instead of being divided as it is now between Rent and Wages, went entirely to Wages, that is, belonged entirely to the labour that produced it. Every man was his own capitalist, just as he was his own tailor and shoemaker. In a very little time, I suppose, as time goes in social development, the tailor and the shoemaker and the capitalist left off ploughing and digging, and stuck each to his own job. Labour specialized itself and so more wealth was produced for everybody who helped, directly or indirectly, in the general business of producing wealth. It is easy to see that the shoemaker, whose constant practice in shoemaking enabled him to turn a pair out for the ploughman in a quarter of the time, the ploughman could have done it for himself,

was giving him so much more time for ploughing, and so was really himself getting food and flax out of the land. But the capitalist—how did he help? And how did he come to have capital to help with?

Luck and Character. One man gets an extra good crop and we see him swap his extra corn for a plough ox. Another turns his extra corn into extra good dinners for the year. A bad season comes and No. 1 will be able to lend seed corn to No. 2, and keep him going till it is grown and harvested. He will get something for the accommodation, of course. That is Interest, as well as the additional crop we saw him get from his economies turned into an ox. And every time he does this he will become more able to do it again. He keeps a stock of corn for these occasions; he gets a spare ox or two in swap for some of it, and has one to lend if a neighbour wants to take more land into cultivation and hasn't quite enough savings of his own to start him with an ox of his own. *He represents the savings of the community.* A spendthrift who won't save gets into the hands of the Capitalist and is *made* to save, to pay the Interest on what has been lent him. His business is to make the saving of one man help to set another forward. He makes it easy for Labour to get at Land and helps cultivators (and consequently shoemakers and tailors) to tide over bad seasons without giving up their industry. And so he both increases production and prevents it from decreasing. His store of "savings" is in a way the ballast of the Ship of Society. It prevents that awful tossing that comes when the empty vessel is at the mercy of each casual and surface wave, and steadies her keel in the calm water of average which lies safe below accident and which nothing short of a tornado can seriously disturb.

But to admit all this utility is a long way from granting that Capital is the grand employer of Labour, and that the number of labourers depends upon the amount of Capital there is to pay them; so that if there are more than there is Capital to pay, the balance must starve. This is to promote Capital from the useful but subordinate position of "hodman" who makes the mason's work easy

by keeping bricks always within reach of his hand, to that of architect at once. The mason can perfectly well go down the ladder and fetch his bricks for himself. The hodman is, of course, a great convenience, and a great expeditor of work. But he is not the mason's employer in any ordinary sense.

Labour is set to work by Necessity, and is paid by what it produces. And this is exactly as much the case with our seamstress as it is with the pioneer of settlement in the backwoods, who lives by what he gets himself out of the material on which his labour is expended, with Thoreau or with Mr. Morton.*

"Well, she can't *eat* a blouse."

No, and Mr. Morton can't *eat* a lump of clay. That is what his labour first turns up out of the land that pays him at last in potatoes. Quite a long series of transmutations of his material have to take place before the final wage-paying shape of a potato is reached in his case, or a bit of bread in hers. But they both produce Exchangeable Value.

Henry George gives an admirable illustration, which I adopt here with a trifling modification to make it fit. Mankind is thirsty, the representative of thirsty mankind is driven by necessity, by the thirstiness of his race, to dig a well. His work for days and days produces nothing. Yet he lives, because each stroke of his pick produces Value, and value is immediately transmutable into bread and bacon or whatever he chooses to turn it into. Water is to be found at twenty feet. He goes off on another job when he has only got fifteen feet deep. He has produced three-quarters of the value of the well and has been paid for his labour as he went along. He is not employed by Capital but by Need—not paid by Capital (by the accumulated savings of mankind) but by the produce of his own labour.

A hundred years or so ago there was a German story of much popularity. The hero finds himself in a pleasant

* "*The Simple Life on Four Acres.*" F. A. Morton. (Fifield, London.)

party of people, one of whom, quite an ordinary person, is constantly appealed to by the others in any social difficulty that happens to arise. Some of them want to take a drive. He puts his hand in his pocket and pulls out—a carriage and pair. The sun gets very hot. Everybody turns to him as a matter of course. In goes his hand and out comes—a marquee. Nobody seems to see anything odd about it. Our hero—— But it is only up to that point that the story serves my turn. Capital plays exactly the same part in human society. A town wants a town-hall, or a watering-place wants a pier, or an emperor wants a fleet. Capital puts its hand in its pocket and out comes the article. That is its legitimate function. It does seem magic when we pass what was a bit of waste ground last year and find a pile of buildings upon it. What has Capital done? It has brought Labour and Material together in compliance with a demand made by Society, and has furnished labour with tools from the supply it has accumulated as the depositary of the savings of labour. If the demand has been a wise one future production will be increased by the utilization of what has been already produced, and further savings will be deposited in the bank of Capital, to facilitate still further production. Existence does not depend upon capital. Progress largely does. As long as capital is associated with production, progress is maintained. All speculation, that is, all transfer for profit, of the means of production from hand to hand, without the intention of production, checks more or less the regular working of the machinery of exchange and makes labour wait unduly for its wages. Time is lost, and Time is—not only money, but everything that money connotes.

But when the subject of speculation is Land, the only fund from which wages can be permanently paid is itself affected. The gas is cut off at the main.

CHAPTER VI.—SPECULATION

WE have said that increasing population brings with it a demand for produce of every conceivable variety, and that this demand goes on increasing even more rapidly than population. It can only be met by the utilization upon new material of all the resources economized by society and deposited in the bank of Capital, the facilitations of production which Capital keeps to let out to Labour, the labour-saving devices of all sorts, among which Money holds an important place. One of the secondary evils arising from Land monopoly is this. As Rent (the share of the Landowner) tends more and more to draw to itself Wage (the share of Labour), and so diminish the Wealth to be divided among all the subsidiary arts that are included in that general term, Interest, the reward of Usury, which is one of those subsidiary arts, necessarily falls. The capitalist has less inducement to confine himself to his own art, which we have seen to be the assistance of Labour, and more temptation to convert the savings of Labour into land, and so join in the appropriation of what is produced by Labour. Production is naturally checked and distress results. But when, by a natural extension of the same movement, the savings of Labour in the bank of Capital are used in land speculation, that is, not merely in diminishing the share of produce that goes to Labour, but in keeping Labour away from the material of production, Land, in order that the consequent rise of Rent may make the *division* of produce so greatly in favour of the Landowner that its general *diminution* may be a matter of indifference to him—then we are compelled to recognize in Capital a distinct enemy to Labour and an active agent in the production of Misery.

I put my savings into the hands of an agent. He uses them to buy my house and business over my head, and re-lets them to me at a preposterous figure. What am I to do? There is nothing illegal in the transaction. If I cannot get my livelihood elsewhere, he is my master and

I am his slave. And that fact acts as a potent inducement to the capitalist. The lust of power is insatiable. It grows with what it feeds on. And, in what we call "a state of civilization," its highest gratification can only be obtained through the possession of Land.

Look at an English village. The power of the class that represents Land is only limited by the right of the labourer to leave the place and seek his living elsewhere. He is specialized for field labour, and wherever he finds employment on the land he will be met by the very same conditions as those he has left. The necessity of submission is so well understood that it has almost ceased to be felt. It is like the pressure of another atmosphere. And that atmosphere is one in which manly qualities decay and servile qualities thrive. The fear of the Landowner—at first, or second, or third hand—has taken the place of the fear of God.

I was struck the other day by the description of English labourers in Canada given by the son of a country rector in the south of England, who had visited the recently settled districts for a business purpose. "Exactly the same sort of men I knew at home," he said, "faces and speech as familiar as if I had been at — again; but *what* a difference in bearing and character!" And what was the reason? Many of these men still worked for wages. Their material condition in a new country and a severe climate was in many cases worse than it had been "at home." There was actual *hardship* in abundance. But Poverty had lost its sting. There were differences of wealth and condition, but the hopelessness of serfdom was at an end. The land could be got at. Men who wanted to get at it dealt directly with Government, not with a landlord inflated in every fibre by the pride of possession. And as no man might hold more than he could cultivate, no speculative capitalist stood between a fertile wilderness and a famishing emigrant.

Even while Henry George was writing, thirty years ago or more, that had ceased to be the case generally throughout the United States. Vast public domains still existed upon paper where cultivation was theoretically free. But

where the emigrant's choice was not limited by natural hindrances—by rock, or swamp, or desert; where, in fact, the land was worth taking up, it was already commanded by some speculating capitalist. "Appropriation," in one form or another, had already got ahead of the settler and was keeping ahead of him. And the result was manifest in the intensification of social differences. The cringing tramp follows the land monopolist like a shadow. With illimitable material, with abundant labour-saving machinery for its easy conversion into all that man requires for his every need, with free institutions and a past of glorious tradition, with liberty gallantly won and slavery generously abolished, the United States had already become the region of the earth where successful greed was most worshipped, Poverty most prostrate and most contemned. In New England, in the very home of the Pilgrim Fathers, the character of the *tenantry* was becoming steadily more and more degraded. Owners of small homesteads were disappearing, rents were going up, wages going down, production diminishing. All the characteristics of an effete civilization were visible already in a comparatively newly settled country, on the edge of a continent of immeasurable extent and boundless fertility. To judge from what comes to us from America now, things seem to have been steadily following the same direction. And that the sympathy of the landowning class in England is with those distinguished members of Transatlantic plutocracy, whose speculations, whatever intermediate form they may take, find their ultimate basis in Land-jobbing upon an enormous scale, is sufficiently obvious in the conduct of their titled representatives, who plunge into the depths of New York financial society and come up with million-heiresses in their lordly mouths. That element has no repulsion whatever for them.

Charles Dickens used to be taken as an exponent of popular morality in England. If the English people did not act up to his standard, they were at any rate supposed to acknowledge it. He voiced their better selves. In "Great Expectations" he introduces a man of ordinary honesty as refusing, as a matter of course, to profit by a

fortune that comes to him as the legatee of a convict. To judge by what Americans themselves say of great American fortunes, the earnings of a convict would be pure and sweet by comparison. Read "A Giant's Strength," a novel just written by an American author, who carefully avoids sensationalism, and tones down every expression of condemnation to the key of well-bred society. Yet the indictment he brings against American plutocracy is a damning one.

The highest members of our English landowning class have no scruples whatever as to the methods by which the American millions are acquired with which they gild their tarnished coronets. What grounds have we for giving them credit for a greater scrupulosity in the exercise of their own powers over their own land? And why should we suppose that small landowners will be less ready than large ones to take whatever advantages the law gives them?

See how the whole thing works. As population increases demand outpaces it. The material of production is denied because land is held back in expectation of still greater demand. The greater the struggle for land the more rents rise. The natural answer of the farmer to the landlord's demand for more rent is to dismiss a labourer. Production is diminished, the land is labour-starved, but money is saved for the moment. The dismissed labourer is ultimately elbowed out of the country into the town. His presence makes land in the town more valuable. There also it is held back in expectation of a further rise in value, and the struggle for mere shelter becomes more intense. The law of rent holds good everywhere, in town as well as country. Rent devours more and more of his wage. A single room has to hold a whole family, and the street is the only alternative. The word "misery" is hardly intense enough to describe the result. This is what Henry George says: "To see human beings in the most abject, the most helpless and hopeless condition, you must go to the great cities, where the ownership of a little patch of land is a fortune." He gives it as his deliberate opinion that if a baby before birth could be given its choice, it

would be wiser to elect to be born in one of the most squalid tribes of savages we know, an Esquimaux, or an Australian "black-fellow," or a clay-eating Terra del Fuegan, than in the lower class of the most highly civilized country on the face of the earth. And most of those will agree with him who have looked into the eyes of English poverty and realized its hopelessness and its despair. "Let me fall into the hands of God," said David, "and not into the hands of man." "The Law of Rent" is the rack upon which Poverty is extended. It is the engine that Land Monopoly once unconsciously created and which it now consciously and ruthlessly employs. The force of the machine goes on increasing with its completeness. No limb of Poverty escapes its wrench. And habit has made its operators absolutely callous to the sufferings of their victims. In the fifteenth century a citizen of Florence advised his sons to accept no magisterial function in their beautiful city. It was impossible, he said, to enjoy yourself at home of an evening after listening to the pitiful cries of men tortured by your own orders. He was as much in advance of his time as Henry George. Magistrates continued to be filled up without difficulty. The enjoyments of Eaton Hall and Woburn Abbey are not affected by the misery of the poor in London slums. And the same callousness goes through from top to bottom. The whole English character is being ruined by the determination of Society to shut its eyes to Wrong.

And the Church is the champion winker. She is determined to see no evil in Land Monopoly, because the land-owning class is her efficient supporter. That class must be dispossessed before she will even begin to admit the possibility of its having been a source of moral evil as well as of material misery. Land Reform can hope for nothing from the Church. She has been retained by the other side at an enormous fee, and receives daily "refreshers."

CHAPTER VII.—RETROSPECT

I THINK it is time to state the position as far as we have gone, to look back over the road we have taken, and see where it has brought us.

Population is increasing, and the desires of men are increasing faster even than their numbers. To set against this we have the enormously increasing productivity of labour and the illimitable supply of material for labour to work on brought within our reach by the practical application of science. But we find that this supply is commanded by a small body of men whose personal prosperity depends upon their limiting it. The "Law of Rent" decrees that the more the supply of material is limited the more precious it will become. The immensely increased demand for material co-operates with this law in putting power into the hands of this small body, the landowners. They naturally use it against the rest of mankind. As what they receive from the rest of mankind for permission to use material increases, they inevitably become richer and the rest of mankind poorer. As long as it is the interest of power to limit the supply of material, the supply of material will be progressively limited. As long as the increase of population is only checked by starvation, population will go on increasing until starvation point is reached. It seems inevitable that the wealth of the land monopolists should embody itself in every refinement of luxury which human effort can produce. This is what is generally understood by "Progress." It seems equally inevitable that the numbers and the need of the rest of mankind (of "the masses") should also find expression in every conceivable modification of misery before starvation arrives. This we call "Poverty." Given these three factors, "Land Monopoly," the "Law of Rent," and an "Increasing Population," and the result is certain. The land-possessing class will tend to what we call Tyranny in its full connotation. The masses *must* gravitate towards Serfdom—unconditional dependence upon those who have the power of depriving them of the means of existence.

The recent ukase of Sir Watkin Wynn to his tenantry is a very good illustration. It is on a sufficiently large scale to attract notice. Every one who chooses to open his eyes may see exactly the same power exercised in exactly the same direction all over England, in town and country alike. The cottager trembles and cowers before the farmer, whose power of turning him into the road is transmitted from the landowner. The tenants of a slum in London dare not ask the landlord for their miserable dens to be even made weather-proof. "Notice" is the answer. The demands of the landowner may take any shape he chooses. They can always be enforced by destitution. The law can do nothing. What is the Law of England against the Law of Rent?

Society has called into existence a monster which is throttling Society. Is there any possibility of choking it off? Henry George thinks it may yet be done. I will try to show the method he suggests and give a rough idea of the reasoning by which he supports his proposals.

CHAPTER VIII.—THE ANSWER

WE see in a moment that the confiscation of land and its division among mankind would be useless. It is our *common* property, and the possession of a rood is exactly as much an infringement of common right as the possession of all Sir Watkin Wynn's estates.

Besides, it is not every one who can make a livelihood off a bit of land, off material in its primary form. Introduce a tailor to a sheep and ask him to make you a coat. A couple of dozen processes must come first, and he knows nothing of any of them. Raw material (and the land is the very rawest of all) is no good to anyone but a man trained to deal with it. Confusion worse confounded would arise from the very attempt to divide our raw material among all the people who have "common rights" in it. We may put all idea of the division of land on one side.

We must remember that the land is our common stock,

the only fund we have and that from which we are, every one of us, fed and clothed and warmed. Whatever change in its occupancy may be made, Reform must fulfil three conditions :—

It must not reduce productivity.

It must not diminish the reward of Labour.

Any advantage it brings must be an advantage in which every member of the community can participate.

Besides this, it is extremely desirable that the change should take place with the least possible disturbance of present arrangements. If Parliament were to confiscate all land and let it out to the highest bidders in convenient lots, using the rent received from them for national expenses of every sort, our purpose would be achieved. The men who were the very fittest to put the land to profit would be brought out by competition, wages would go up at once, and the relief to taxation would be felt by every one. But the shock would be tremendous. It would be a social earthquake, the effects of which it would take a generation of reconstruction to repair.

Henry George's plan is exactly as effectual, but infinitely less revolutionary.

Confiscate not land, but Rent. Leave to the owners enough to make it worth their while to collect the whole. The rent so confiscated would go towards paying what the public now pays in taxation, and every member of the community would be relieved of a burden, would profit ultimately to the extent of his liability to the common charges of Government. While no landowner would *necessarily* lose that character of proprietorship to which so much sentimental value attaches, all those who were not making proper use of the material of production of which the community permits them to call themselves the possessors, would be under a strong and progressively increasing inducement to get it off their shoulders.

Let us suppose two cases in the same parish. John Brown owns 100 acres of poor land and makes the most of it. Lord T. Naudy owns 4000 acres of better land, 300 of which form his park and pleasure ground. The economic

Rent of J. B.'s property is £25, that is, it is worth 5s. an acre a year more than the very worst land in the neighbourhood worth using at all for agricultural purposes. That represents the exchange value of the land, and is the property of the whole people of England collectively. But the community will only enter into its entire rights by degrees. We will suppose (it is a mere supposition) that the collection of this rent will be by fifths, at intervals of five years, beginning in this case with £5. Other taxes would be proportionately reduced. J. B. would have less to pay in house-tax, poor-rates, and indirect taxation. No improvement that he chose to make would be liable. In twenty-five years things will have adjusted themselves to the new conditions. Its immense economies on the collection of revenue will have enabled Government to spend largely on works of common advantage: *good* schools, recreation grounds, trained nurses in every village (a want now *horribly* felt), public baths and libraries, the whole *material* of civilization. The ambition of moral and intellectual advance without which such material is useless will have received immense stimulus from what has been going on in the case of Lord T. Naudy, J. B.'s neighbour in the same parish. We will take his park first, 300 acres of good fat land, and well worth £1 an acre of Economic Rent. He has a few cattle there, for amusement and the supply of his house with milk and butter; but that does not really pay for the expense of keeping it in the condition of a "pleasance," of a tract of land devoted to "pleasure." What is really kept fat in those 300 acres is his lordly dignity. To maintain that in proper condition he is willing to sacrifice the profit (say £500 a year) that might come from cultivating it himself, plus the £300 a year of its Rental value. His lordly dignity is an expensive animal to feed. It costs him in this one article of a park £800 a year, besides costing England all that might have been grown upon the land of the park. Government, under the new system, steps in with a demand for £60 a year, and an intimation that this will be by and by raised to £300, the Rental Value. Of course he may pay if he likes and keep his park as

a park. Some Lord T. N.'s will do so. But the probability is that he will put his lordly dignity on short allowance and let or sell his "pleasance" for cultivation, or perhaps for building purposes, subject to the Governmental claim. The privilege of living close to the "Hall" will make tradesmen from the neighbouring town pay handsomely for it for "villa residences," much more than it would fetch as mere agricultural land. This additional value would also be assessable to Government. The price it fetched or that was offered for it for building would measure its rental value. Hatfield would contribute handsomely to the national revenue. Very much the same is the case with the rest of his lordship's 4000 acres. It is let out among great farmers at a rent which saves him trouble. Of course it is labour-starved. One farm, of 500 acres, having fallen vacant, has been added to the holding of the next-door tenant, who cultivates it with the assistance of *one* more labourer than those already employed upon his original 1000 acres.* The Government demand is a heavy item and his lordship raises his rents. It is quite clear that the farms will have to produce more and that they must consequently employ more labour, or else be thrown up and come into the market. When labour is wanted labour will raise its terms. Much land is certain to be offered for sale in lots likely to attract "little men." J. B. will have "neighbours," not my lord, who does not know him by sight, nor great, idle farmers who look down upon him from the mountain-tops of "position" as a man of bodily labour, nor labourers bemused with beer beyond the possibility of social intercourse, but men of hopes and aspirations kindred to his own. Among them will grow up "society," that power of bringing matters of individual interest into a common fund and so producing a common interest, in the conscious and progressive exercise of which lies our entire hope of rising as a race from the absolute selfishness of the brute to the perfect altruism of the sons of God. Nothing is more painfully conspicuous at present in a country village than the utter absence of "society" among the poor. The

* *A recent fact.*

word, like the word "gentleman," has been annexed by the rich, and its use by a labouring man would certainly bring upon him the accusation of Anarchism and Communism. The mere rise of wages does little for the labourer unless it is accompanied by the hope of escape from the "Land of Egypt, the house of bondage," into the Canaan of independence. In the new state of things the demand for skill in the primary art of cultivation will become so great that any agricultural labourer may fairly hope to become a land-holder. His head will go up with his hopes. He, too, will become a member of "Society."

In the market town, not very far from John Brown's village, a railway junction has given a great impulse to population. Slums have naturally accompanied it, because there is no building land to be had except at prices that make rent so high that people prefer being crowded together like pigs to being half starved through paying a third of income in house rent.

The town lies in the middle of open fields, and there is, of course, abundance of land available for building, only it is in the hands of speculators financed by attorneys, drawing their funds out of the pockets of dozens of people who want high interest for their money. There is, say, one nice little block of a couple of acres that lies most convenient in every way. It is doing absolutely nothing. It is not "ripe" yet. That is the technical expression. It has not yet been manured by human misery to its *extreme* point of productivity in money. Government steps in under the new plan, assesses its rental value on the basis of the present selling price for building purposes of similar land similarly circumstanced, and puts out a hand for the Rent so determined. It does not take a prophet to tell that land of that sort will be very soon in the market. It will be built over in no time. Rents will go down, wages will go up, everybody will have more to spend, and J. B., in his village half a dozen miles away, will feel the general prosperity in the increased demand for his pigs and poultry and produce all round. In a very little time he will be growing asparagus and putting quite a tidy bit of ground under marrowfats, to

accompany his ducklings to market. Working men know what is good and they don't mind spending their money upon it, when Rent leaves them anything of a balance after paying for the barest necessities of life.

Now suppose this going on all over England. Some way back I asked you to imagine the coming into existence of a new county, Severnshire. This would be practically the same thing, only its effect would be more immediate. Labour would not have to make its way half across England to find a new field for its employment. Half-cultivated land would be in the market everywhere. A demand would be created for all the commodities of life which are beyond the reach of labourers in casual and intermittent employ, but which would come into daily use as soon as every man who could work and would work found that he could obtain access to the material out of which his labour would produce wealth. And this, by our supposition, would extend to labour in every branch of industry.

CHAPTER IX.—OBJECTIONS

IT may very fairly be objected that this state of general prosperity could only be temporary, a "boom," not a permanent rise in national well-being. Let out your new county for cultivation on what conditions you will. By and by it will fill up. The crop of babies will be immense and there will be no better provision for them than before. Population will continue to press upon the limits of subsistence, which are only imperfectly elastic. This elasticity necessarily produces Poverty, which is a graduated advance from comfort to starvation. Devices of the sort you propose may defer the inevitable for a time, they can do no more. As John Stuart Mill says, "A time would soon arrive when no one would have more than mere necessities; and, soon after, a time when no one would have a sufficiency of these, and the further increase of population would be arrested by death." And for the purpose of this forecast he assumes the *perfection* of the system you desire to establish: the nationalization of all

instruments of production (Land in its most comprehensive sense) and the equal division of the produce (Wealth in its most comprehensive sense). "The niggardliness of Nature," says Mr. Mill, "*not* the injustice of society, is the cause of the penalty attached to over-population." The penalty we have seen to be that state of progressive misery ending in starvation which goes by the name of Poverty. You are "fighting against God."

Henry George meets this with a flat denial. Poverty, according to him, comes from the injustice of man, *not* from the niggardliness of nature. Experience, as far as history and knowledge go, shows that the increase of population is attended by a still greater increase in the power of production, so that its natural tendency is to make every individual richer instead of poorer.

I think a single paragraph of "Progress and Poverty" states Henry George's case completely. He abounds in illustrative proof. But every reader possesses knowledge enough to submit his position to the test of a pretty wide experience. This is what he says:—

"Even if the increase of population does reduce the power of the natural factor of wealth by compelling a resort to poorer soils, etc., it yet so vastly increases the power of the human factor as to more than compensate. Twenty men working together will, when nature is niggardly, produce more than twenty times the wealth that one man can produce where nature is most bountiful. The denser the population the more minute becomes the subdivision of labour, the greater the economies of production and distribution, and, hence . . . within the limits in which we have any reason to believe increase" (of population) "would still go on, in any given state of civilization a greater number of people can produce a larger proportionate amount of wealth and more fully supply their wants than can a smaller number."

Malthus and John Stuart Mill are of course theoretically correct. The surface of the globe being limited and the increase of population, by supposition, illimitable, starvation must come, sooner or later, from sheer shortness of material out of which food can be produced. (If nothing

happens in the meantime, of course.) But that time is immeasurably remote. Compare the total area of the globe with the fraction of it necessary to maintain the human race in comfort for another five thousand years, supposing the average rate of increase of mankind since history (even) began, to be maintained. Mexico was the home of swarming millions that had practically vanished long before the Spanish conquest. Babylon and Nineveh and Egypt—any one of them would have been enough to *crowd* the globe with men if the impulse that for a few hundred years drove their populations along the road of increase had not given out. Such impulses always do give out. England—Europe itself is only a corner. And our rate of increase already frightens us! One is inevitably reminded of the story of the miser who at 80, and with 1000 guineas stitched up in his mattress, refused himself every comfort of life because he had heard that old Parr lived to be 140, and was afraid of being left destitute in his old age. And remember besides that we are daily developing new powers and discovering new resources. Potatoes came to our help a few hundred years ago. Bananas seem to promise an almost inexhaustible supply of wholesome food. Our needs and our habits adapt themselves to new conditions. Vegetarianism has made immense way among us. In well-to-do circles three and sometimes four meals of meat were a usual allowance much less than a century ago. Look at the paunches of politicians from George I to George IV! Great farmers still continue the practice, and we regard their enormous proportions with a sort of incredulous amazement. Science is turning to the sea, and we may look forward to a time when its harvests will be gathered in with the confident hope that the toll we take will increase instead of diminish its enormous productivity. Coal supplemented our supply of wood, mineral oils and electricity are already relieving the demand we make upon our coalfields, radium is on the way. "Not in vain the distance beckons." Everywhere we look there is hope for the future of the human race, even supposing that it is to be perpetually immune from the catastrophic set-backs

which have hitherto, from time to time, checked its numerical advance. All experience tells us that civilizations and their swarming life are not immortal. A glacial period may solve our difficulties and make foreboding futile. But whatever surprises of this sort fate may have in store for us, we need not look forward to starvation as the *necessary* goal of our racial existence, nor of that of any human being who may be born upon the earth within any period near enough for us to take reasonably into account. Mr. Malthus was the fashionable prophet of a society which wanted a scientific and religious justification for the selfish luxury in which it lived. And he supplied it. Poverty, it seems, was exactly as grinding and as inevitable in an England of ten millions as it now is when our population has quadrupled itself. Henry George, endowed with every resource that personal physique, intelligence, and energy could supply, came very near starving in San Francisco. The city had fifty thousand inhabitants, and over-population was supposed to have intensified the struggle for life to such a degree that every breath was a battle. We may dismiss the Malthusian theory then with the confident assertion that however true the gloomy prognostications of the prophets of evil may ultimately prove to be, Poverty, at the present time, is *not* caused by any "pressure of population against the limits of subsistence," or by any "niggardliness of nature in the supply of the material of production," or by any "decrease in the relative power of producing wealth" out of that material. Nor is it likely to be so caused within any period falling within the range of reasonable prevision. But these are the reasons, "*not* the injustice of society," which are assigned by John Stuart Mill and others for the want and misery which are the permanent condition of by far the greater number of mankind. If, then, they are wrong, as seems to be shown by the fact that the greatest possible liberality of nature does not ensure the well-being of even the smallest group of men, it would appear that the alternative must be correct, that the INJUSTICE of society is the cause of Poverty.

What special form does this injustice take ?

I cannot see any flaw in the chain of reasoning by which Henry George connects Poverty with the arbitrary limitation of the material of production out of which it is the function of Labour to educe Wealth. Take an illustration :—

Here is a church with half its space occupied by family pews, carefully closed against intrusion, and always next door to empty. A popular preacher comes and there is a rush to hear him. Every free sitting is crammed, lots of people have to stand, and there is a tremendous crush at the doors. What is the reason? There is plenty of room in the church. The pews, naturally. What is the remedy? To open them. That is an interference with the rights of property. My good and most respectable pew-owners and landowners, there is one thing you have got to learn, and that is that poor folk have got souls and bodies as well as yourselves.

The next point of the New Teaching to be dwelt upon is, I think, the effect upon the production of wealth and upon social organization which it promises as a result of the ultimate substitution of a single tax upon Land Values for the present complicated system of duties, rates, and imposts by which the public revenue is raised.

The principle upon which Henry George's proposed reform rests is simple.

Everything that a man produces by himself he is to keep for himself. In everything that comes to him from the exertions of his neighbours (of Society) he can only claim an equal share with his neighbours. He can claim that because his exertions benefit them just as theirs benefit him. Take Belgrave Square, as its evolution has been described to me. A few years ago a man was alive who had shot snipe there. It was a swamp. It became valuable because London pushed westward, and every man who ran up a house nearer and nearer to it added something to its value. As population came closer it became worth while to drain it and use it for growing cabbages. Its selling value as a market garden came from the neighbours who had built houses and come to live and wanted to eat cabbages close to it. The *cabbages* were due to the

personal labour of the Duke of Westminster,* exerted through his paid labourers, and so, according to Henry George, were his own. No one could lay a claim to them. But the value of the ground as a cabbage garden came from the neighbours—without their presence it would have produced two or three couple of snipe every year, and every now and then pastured a cow. Nothing more. By and by the Duke had it drained and houses built over part of it, much, I suppose, of the same character as those all round. The ground had got building value, and this building value came from the neighbours precisely as the garden value had done. The houses belonged to the Duke just as the cabbages had. And now that the ground is occupied by "palatial mansions" the case is exactly the same. The palatial mansions belong to the Duke. The ground they are built on belongs by right to the public, of whom the Duke is one. And the same is true all through London, all through England, all through everywhere.

The Land is the common property of mankind. When a man lives alone, like Robinson Crusoe, in absolute "isolation," it has of course a value to him as providing him with what he wants. But it has no exchange value. That exchange value is produced by Society, by the association of men together for mutual help; it belongs to Society, and it is the fund from which the needs of Society should be provided.

Rent is really nothing but the price of the license issued by Society, permitting use to be made of its property. What one pays for a license to kill game is not unlike it. England practically declares that game is the property of Society, and that permission to kill it will only be given on payment of a certain sum of money, which is credited to revenue, that is, used for the general good. That a partridge nominally belongs to Squire Topper makes no difference. The issue of these Land licenses has been

** I am afraid I have put the cart before the horse. It was the cabbages, cottages, and palatial mansions that produced the Duke, not the reverse. What he was before I know not. Perhaps only a baron.*

mistakenly put in the hands of private persons, with the result that might have been expected. They have taken advantage of the disorganization of Society to pocket the revenue that belongs to Society. One instance may be given. Up to 1660 the duty of providing a national army rested upon the landowners of England, being transmitted by the feudal system from the greatest to the smallest, roughly speaking, according to the quantity of land each possessed. In that year they shook off the burden imposed upon them by their feudal obligation. *But they kept the land.*

As population (Society) increases, it goes on adding automatically to the value of land, and thus provides a continuously increasing fund, out of which all *social*, all corporate needs could be met. We have seen that the exchange value of land is produced not by its nominal owner, but by the labour of Society, which is therefore the rightful owner of the Rent which represents that value. The Rent of England would amply provide for the defence and the government of England. A single tax on land could be collected with very much less expense than the numerous imposts with which we are at present worried. It is the difference between attacking wasps in the nest and in the air. One single operation takes the place of many. It would also possess the very great advantage of not checking production in any shape or form. Any tax laid upon any industry must more or less discourage it. If apples were a specially profitable crop, a tax on apple trees would make fewer be planted. A tax on the land they grew in would make more be planted. The great quantity of material of production offering itself to labour as soon as holding it back for speculative purposes or exclusive enjoyment became too expensive for ordinary purses, would solve the unemployed question, and in doing so would immensely diminish that burden of crime and misery which England makes a sorry shift to bear with her prisons and workhouses and asylums and hospitals. We need not look *too* far ahead. Labour is becoming more and more fluid as locomotion and information are perfected. There would be under the new system, for

hundreds of years, an abundance of remunerative employment in *England*, if the men who want work and the work that wants men could only come together without the wasteful delays, in which opportunity vanishes and the will to work disappears. Wealth would increase enormously, and the private reservoirs of the Land Monopolist being closed, its fertilizing streams would find their way at last to Poverty. The effect upon the character of the working man (that is, upon *England*) would be in the highest degree beneficial. There is no moral reformer like moderate prosperity. When the labourer ceased to be haunted by visions of wife and children holding up their hands to him for the bread he had not to give, when the forgetfulness of anxiety that comes from drink was no longer his highest conception of enjoyment, then at last Education would begin to influence his character—for good. In that direction it is at present powerless. It is vain to look for "the reason firm, the temperate will, endurance, forethought, strength and skill" of the man of full mental growth in the poor wretch who haunts street corners for a casual job and does not know to-day where to look for a meal to-morrow. To be poor is to be an object of contempt, and contempt crushes the soul. In a civilized country physical and moral degradation go hand in hand. And Education only adds the pang of consciousness to both.

It is impossible to divide Society into water-tight compartments. The degradation of the poor percolates throughout. The character of *England* is infected with *servile* vices. Dishonesty and greed and cringing prostration before money meet us everywhere. Our national contempt for the poor is complemented by our national worship of the rich, by the "snobbery" which describes *England* to the world in a single epithet. It is the motto of our social shield.

When the "tone" of an institution—of a public school, for instance—or of any body of individuals unified by social ties, can fairly be said to be "bad" the necessity for radical reform is generally admitted. But it is obvious that in such a case nothing effectual can be done until the causes are reached and removed. And the claims to

consideration of the "managing body" must hold a very low place in comparison with this necessity. But as these claims are urged as an argument against a change of system which would deprive the managing body of their emoluments, Henry George devotes a section of his book to the discussion of the "justice" of the remedy he proposes. I confess I think that a good deal of this is superfluous. The question can be stated in a few words with sufficient precision for Reason to come to a conclusion on its merits.

CHAPTER X.—RIGHTS AND WRONGS

IF the reader of "Progress and Poverty" has accompanied Henry George in his demonstration up to this point, he must either have been convinced that Poverty is produced by Land Monopoly, or not. In the second case, the book can have no more interest for him. We will assume him to have been convinced, but to require moral justification for the course it is proposed to take for the abolition of Land Monopoly.

The one and all-sufficient argument seems to me to be—Necessity. A man's leg is gangrened. He is very sorry for his leg, but when it comes to a choice between that and his life, off goes the leg. If he is a man of sense, the hope that, if he declines an operation, he may still go on rotting alive for some considerable time before death puts an end to his diseased and suffering existence, will not weigh much with him. Once satisfied of the seriousness of his malady, his decision is made.

I will quote Henry George's description of the malady :

"It is a toll levied upon labour constantly and continuously. It takes little children from play or from school and compels them to work before their muscles are firm ; it robs the shivering of warmth ; the hungry of food ; the sick of medicine ; the anxious of peace. It debases and embrates and embitters. It crowds families of eight and ten into one squalid room ; it fills the gin palace with those who have no comfort in their homes ; it fills brothels

with girls who might have known the pure joys of motherhood; it sends greed and all evil passions prowling through society as a hard winter drives the wolves to the abodes of men. . . ."

I have omitted from this and other quotations much that goes to enforce Henry George's arguments. But—is not this serious enough? May we not say with him, "Why should we hesitate about making short work of such a system?" Let us admit at once that Land Monopolists as individuals are only responsible to the laws of England and the law of common humanity for the use they make of the power placed in their hands by a system which did not originate with themselves. If Lord Penrhyn, Lord Clanricarde, and Sir Watkin Wynn may be taken as typifying various forms of the deliberate abuse of power so committed to them, other great landlords may be cited who have done all they could to mitigate the evil effects of the system of which they are the involuntary representatives. This is no argument for the continuation of a state of things in the average effect of which upon mankind the evil enormously outweighs the possible good. An invading army lands on the shores of England. It contains soldiers of every rank, inspired by the highest feelings of which man is capable, by patriotism, by devotion to duty, not impossibly even by a conviction that they represent the conquest of a higher civilization, and are really burning and slaying in the purest interests of humanity. If we agree with them it is our duty to desert, or at any rate to stand neutral. If we do not our business is to fight them to the death. Their virtues are nothing to us. They are the enemy, and they must be routed and expelled. That is the first and great necessity, and to that all other considerations must be subordinate.

Is permanent, progressive, and undeserved Poverty an evil which is destroying the great mass of the English people, body and soul?

Is it caused by Land Monopoly?

If the answer to these two questions is "Yes," then all doubt of the justice of the abolition of Land Monopoly is at an end.

Let the process of its abolition be as gentle as is compatible with the interests of the innumerable human beings whom it has so long "held fast bound in misery and iron." Let there be no vindictive feeling on the part of the struggling people, but only a firm resolution to have done with it for Good and for Ever.

CHAPTER XI.—FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

THE law of Rent is like sunlight—we see it in most places. But it is a mistake to think that its effects are limited by its visibility. They extend far beyond the ultimate violet of the spectrum. And so it is with Rent.

"The widow is gathering nettles for her children's dinner; a perfumed seigneur, delicately lounging in the *Œil de Bœuf*, hath an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle and call it Rent." So Carlyle, and we think he has followed Rent about as far as it can go. Not at all.

A tiny girl runs to her father with some shells she has picked up at low water on the sands in front of a watering place. "See, dad-da, God gave these to Flossie. Dad-da had to give money to get Flossie a dolly. Dad-da hadn't to give any money for Flossie's shells. They came *straight* out of God's sea."

"You are not a political economist, Flossie," says dad-da, glancing at two papers before him. One is an advertisement of the attractions of Sunshore, or wherever it may be, in which "sand and shells" figure conspicuously; the other his landlady's bill, in which "Rent of Rooms" holds a leading place. Flossie's pleasure was much in his mind when he chose that place for his holiday. It was also in the mind of Sir Hawkeye Longview, the squire, as determining the ground-rent paid by the landlady. A tiny girl's possible pleasure in picking up a shell contributes to Sir H. L.'s pleasure at Monte Carlo. He has not put any labour into Sea, or Sand, or Shells. Yet he draws a handsome income from their existence. "And so

the whole round world is everywhere, Hung in gold chains about the feet of—Rent."

It is the same everywhere. Land is the common property of Society, and every member of Society is impoverished by that part of its produce which we call Rent, and which belongs to Society as a corporate entity, being annexed by individuals and expended for their private and exclusive advantage. This general pauperization (impoverishment) naturally falls most heavily upon those least able to support it. As they give way they are crushed, and the stronger, progressively, follow them in their fall. The "margin of subsistence" becomes narrower with each step towards starvation. Our poor seamstress, who consents to come down from 1½d. apiece for her blouses to rd., instead of electing to sit and starve, is driving another to take ¾d. And the Law of Rent is behind them both with its relentless and irresponsible pressure.

There is an awful story by Edgar Allan Poe exactly illustrative of the position.

A heretic has fallen into the clutches of the Spanish Inquisition. Condemned, he is confined in a large room with walls faced with iron. A pit occupies one corner. He suspects a trap and avoids going near it. The days pass and his condition is unchanged. He begins to hope. Then, little by little, an idea, a doubt, a vague suspicion of horror asserts itself in his mind. The room is growing smaller. Every day brings him an inch nearer to the pit. The margin grows narrower and narrower. Look in he must, perforce. He looks and sees—hell, or as good an imitation of it as priestly ingenuity can devise. The Pit is Poverty, and the contracting walls are Rent. And every landless man in England is a heretic, to whom the awful engine may, sooner or later, be applied. To those who saw the recent exhibition of sweated industries, or who have seriously tried to realize for themselves the condition of the mass of labourers in London, either by personal investigation, or by a serious and truth-requiring study of scientific books upon the subject, to describe modern Poverty as "hellish" will seem no exaggeration.

Of course the engine of Rent is ultimately worked by

men. It is of human, not of divine institution. I will repeat here the quotation from Keats I made earlier in the book—

“Half ignorant, they turn an easy wheel,
That sets sharp racks at work to pinch and peel.”

If the Man on the Margin (the man who is being quietly impelled into the Pit—the whole English working class) can get at the Man at the Wheel (the landowning class) he will do well to make him drop the handle *at once*. And, like Christian in Doubting Castle, he possesses a key which—but the “Pilgrim’s Progress” is now little read. I will quote the passage: “What a fool,” quoth he, “am I thus to lie in a stinking Dungeon when I may as well walk at Liberty! I have a Key in my bosom——” What is the Key?

The Key is the Vote. It is able to open the door, to put the man in the prison face to face with the man who keeps him there.

The riddle that Henry George undertakes to solve is one that concerns the destiny of the whole human race. If the answer he gives to it is right, his evangel, his “message of good news” to mankind, is the greatest ever proclaimed upon the earth since our Saviour came to set at liberty those that “sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.”

Death comes to each of us but once. But his shadow blackens the future far beyond the limit of an individual life. To what fate are we leaving our children?

A millionaire may possibly close his eyes with an assured confidence that, revolutions and idiocy apart, his descendants for three generations will not “fall into Poverty.” The very expression suggests the Pit of which we have spoken. Take the foulest slum in London, the garrets, whose only good genius is the sweater who gives “work,” and you will find names that suggest a lordly lineage. “To this last.” You see your own grandchildren or great-grandchildren in the stunted, scrofulous, half-starved bottle-brats, that crawl on the putrid bricks of London cellars.

Why should it be so? Why should poverty be horrible?

Henry George gives a simple reason. Man is kept alive by Work. Work implies material to work upon. Refuse him material and you refuse him *life*. Poverty is the slow process by which his life is taken. There is no terror in Work. Labour, the primeval curse, is a blessing in disguise. The association of Poverty with Labour is of purely human origin. By giving material we abolish *undeserved* Poverty. And we leave Labour, no longer accompanied by that foul associate, as a sufficient heritage to our descendants for countless generations.

APPENDIX.—HENRY GEORGE'S WORKS

THIS little book in no way professes to be a compendium of Henry George's teaching, or even of as much of it as is contained in the great work with which his name is principally associated, "Progress and Poverty."

It is simply an appeal to the casual reader to examine for himself a subject which is of great, perhaps of supreme importance to the English people.

Should he be inclined to do so after reading this, he may naturally look here for information to guide him in his further inquiries.

"Progress and Poverty" was published in 1881. The views it advocates are represented in England by two leading societies, the "Land Nationalisation Society," and the "English League for the Taxation of Land Values." The first of these dates back to 1881. It owes its origin, not immediately to Henry George's teaching, but to that of Alfred Russel Wallace, whose book, "Land Nationalisation," written independently of "Progress and Poverty," appeared almost simultaneously with it. "The League" (originally known as the "Land Reform Union") was formed a couple of years later. These two societies differ as to the claim to compensation on the part of landowners to be dispossessed by the nationalisation of the land. Henry George's individual views are, perhaps, more exactly represented by "The League" and other kindred societies ("The Single Tax League" of Glasgow, etc.), which advocate the progressive taxation of Land Values without compensation, while the original society adheres to the plan of modified purchase with taxation laid down by its founder and president. It will be seen that this difference in no way affects the main principle, which is, simply, that the people, in one way or another, should resume the ownership of the land. The question of the "rights" of individuals was discussed by Henry George in a book, "A Perplexed Philosopher,"

published in 1892. This might advantageously be read in this connection.

All his principal works were written with the object of enforcing one single basic principle, and their arguments finally converge upon it.

"Protection or Free Trade" (1885), which is ostensibly an examination of the Tariff question as affecting the interests of labour, conducts the reader step by step to the conclusion that the ultimate "robber" of the working man's earnings is Private Property in Land.

"Social Problems" (1883), after expounding the wrongs to humanity inseparable from actual social conditions, culminates in the proposal to "concentrate all taxation into a tax upon the value of Land." The great work which his death left unfinished, "The Science of Political Economy" (published in its incomplete state) aimed at the reconstruction of that science on principles in accordance with what he held to be the natural law of human society. His smaller works, "The Condition of Labour," a reply to a Papal encyclical, "Property in Land," a retort to an attack by the late Duke of Argyll in a leading English magazine, and countless articles in magazines and newspapers are all inspired by the same profound conviction that the root of the tree of social wrong is Land Monopoly. That is the primordial iniquity, and as long as it continues to exist, all human progress can be but a perpetuation and extension of Human Injustice.

It is difficult to read any of these books without admitting the justice of the principle on which they rest. It is impossible to read them without full conviction of the intellectual grasp and of the absolute integrity of purpose of the writer.

THE END

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